


I was a kid in a village, doing alright, then I became a prince overnight

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I was a kid in a village, doing alright, then I became a prince overnight

by [sircantus](#)

Summary

(Yes the title is from sofia the first, yes I'm laughing at it, I find it funny-)

In which Phil has created the Antarctic Empire from the ground up and takes in Techno and Wilbur along the way, and raises them while also ruling his kingdom. Tommy, sixteen, lives with Tubbo in an orphanage, the two of them running around in the cold streets of their town.

After a hectic day of getting separated from Tubbo, getting into a few fights, and ending up in an entirely new town, he comes across Phil, and saves him from an assassination attempt by smashing a plate over someone's head.

So then both Techno and Wilbur decide to see who this kid is, and Tommy sure is endearing, in the way that the first time they spy on him, he starts a fight in an alleyway over a bag of cookies.

(and then Tommy basically gets kidnapped into the royal family, but like, legally, y'know?)

Notes

I am SLEEPY and also am having fun, here you go, have plot, im gonna sleep because its one am woo hoo

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

- Translation into Español available: [Era un niño en un pueblo, era feliz, despues en un principe me volvi](#) by [ScapeSystem](#)

The start of it all

The start of the Antarctic Empire wasn't exactly something you could put on a calendar.

The beginning of it was slow, at first, a small community following Phil, who had stories and rumors swirling around him every moment, from his impossible achievement of defeating the dragon. Then it exploded and grew, turning into houses and towns, to hundreds, thousands of people flocking to the growing kingdom, which then grew into an empire, with their emperor protecting them and ruling over with a kind hand.

From how the stories go, Phil is one of the many, too many, adventurers who went on the journey to the end, to find the stronghold, and step through the portal, to the beast that lies beyond.

Unlike the hundreds before him, he succeeded in it all, going through the land, finding the stronghold that sat at the middle of a huge mountain, in the middle of a snowy, frozen biome, and he found the portal that sat deep in the stone, like so many before.

And like the hundreds before him, he went in. But unlike the others who had failed, he came back.

And he came back with wings upon his back, with a new unbelievable story, and with an unlocking of magic across the entire realm.

When he came back, he had somehow opened a closed, locked door, which let in unknown possibilities, and with it, unknown threats.

Potions and magic was something new, something that brought recovery and healing onto new levels. It made strides and it broke rules, saving so many and making certain illnesses a thing of the past.

Monsters came at night. New creatures, dangerous and unknown. Kingdoms which used to stand tall, unyielding, they didn't know how to fight it, and ended up falling into shambles, torn apart by the upbringing of a new era of a new world.

People became lost, and while things were learned, and defenses were taught, many didn't have anywhere to go, and didn't have places to hide away at night.

Then word broke out that the man who had killed the dragon himself, the man who set free these impossible possibilities into the world, had returned to the stronghold to protect the portal to the End. He had gone to protect the portal from others, to stop any more adventurers from venturing in, for he was determined for him to be the last one, for the cycle to stop.

And when word of his location broke out, of his goal to protect that mountain, protect the stronghold, in the impossibly cold biome, so no more would have to die like so many did before, people went to him.

At first, only small groups, setting up camp on the mountain, keeping their distance from Phil himself, but staying nearby, for the stories said that he protected the mountain, and if they stayed on the mountain, then they would be protected as well.

Then those small groups grew into a small town, joined by others every other week. A small community popped up at the side of the mountain, buildings being made, and roads being put down. They stayed there in Phil's supposed protection, and stories went out across the land of the beginnings of a new place, where it was safe.

Cold, and new, but safe, under the watch of the person who slayed the dragon. And with that sort of appeal, it's no wonder so many went along.

Then one day, Phil came down from the top of the mountain, from the stronghold itself, to investigate the people who had created a home.

The town had grown, and it was busy and warm, a bustling town with stores and families, houses and music, art and writings, life was apparent wherever you went.

Phil had walked through the streets with a cape over his wings, and a hood over his head, eyes observing and watching, and a smile on his face as he saw that people had flourished, under his protection.

Truthfully, he didn't even know they trusted him with their protection. He hadn't even known they were there, before word got to him and he became curious.

He had walked through those streets, he remembers, going up to a small stall at the corner of the street, someone handing out hot chocolate, kids and parents grabbing a cup, people lingering around, sitting in chair, on barrels, talking amongst themselves and enjoying the nice environment, and the hot chocolate.

Phil walked up to the same small stall, lowering his hood, rubbing his hands in the cold, looking to the woman who was giving out the drinks.

"Hot chocolate?" Phil asked, grinning at the lady, raising his eyebrows. "It's appropriate for the weather."

"It always is. The weather never seems to get warm around here." She had responded, grabbing a cup for Phil, pouring some out. Glancing up to Phil, she slowed in her movements, taking a small double take, observing his face, his hair and eyes.

Because stories of Phil had at least gotten some details right, those being of his hair being gold, and his eyes being a bright blue, always described as bright with hope. And the lady could only stare, looking over the cape that hid Phil's back, staring at his blond hair pulled into a small ponytail.

Phil didn't notice, only gazed up and down the street, to the people hanging around, laughing and passing stories. By the time he looked back to her, she was holding the cup in front of her, frozen, eyes wide in disbelief, because his eyes were bright blue, as they always were.

“Oh, it never gets warm. It’s like this even during the summer.” Phil said, taking the cup from her, giving a grateful nod. “You get used to the cold.”

“You-” Phil took a sip from his drink, about to turn away, and the lady hit her palms against the table in front of her, leaning forward.

“What’s under your cape?” She asked, loud enough to catch the attention of some, and people nudged each other, stopped their conversations, pointed to Phil.

Phil paused, looking back to her, and noticing that the street slowly went quiet, eyes on him.

“You’re him.” Someone said, and it wasn’t a question, but a hesitant statement.

Phil smiled nervously, laughing a little and taking another sip from his cup, because now there were a lot of eyes on him, and he hadn’t really expected the awe and amazement that came along with it.

“I’d thought I would come down.” Phil rubbed a hand at the back of his neck, the street silent, holding their breaths. “See how you all were doing.”

Then everyone was getting up, the place erupting in greetings and voices, loud and vibrant, people shaking Phil’s hand, patting him on the shoulders, keeping their distance and yet standing awfully close.

Phil was stuck in the middle of a loud crowd, which only grew as the day went on, because the knowledge that Phil was in the town spread like wildfire, and it wasn’t long before everyone was looking for a glimpse of the man who made such a change in the world they knew.

That was an exhausting day, talking with so many, walking around and being led around by friendly townspeople, and being given gift after gift, to the point where Phil had to stop and

figure out how to carry the flowers, the bread, the letters and the drawings, because there was so much, and he only had a small satchel at his hip when he came down from the stronghold.

And when night fell, no matter how much Phil insisted he was fine, he ended up with a free bed, and his own room in someone's home, the floor littered with the gifts from the people.

As Phil sat on the bed, his cape put to the side, wings shifting on his back as he stared at how *much* there was, he could only wonder as to how they adored him so much when he had done so little.

"We're your people, you know." The lady who had given him the room said, an old woman with age in her features, her eyes holding so much. She stood by the doorway, small and worn with her years, but kind, and as her eyes glanced to the wings on Phil's back, she smiled.

"My-" Phil shook his head, looking away from the gifts on the ground. "W-what?"

"That's what the town thinks. You protect the mountain, don't you? The portal." She shrugs, leaning a hand onto the doorway.

"I-" Phil thinks of the End, of how empty the place was, how the dragon had flown over his head, roaring so loud that it rang in his ears, and how he ran for cover, gasping and wondering if this was the reason others never came back- "Yes. I do."

"Then we are a part of it. That's why we're here, after all. We think of you as protection."

"Oh." Phil holds his hands to his heart, looking back down at the gifts, at the pile of letters at his feet, the flowers and food, drinks, little pieces of art, all from the people in this small town, his town, apparently.

"I have a gift for you as well." She said, walking off as Phil insisted it wasn't necessary, that really, this room was more than enough-

But she came back anyway with a thin silver crown in her hands, and Phil didn't say another word as she put it on his head.

If they were *his* people, then what was he?

Personally, in Phil's opinion, that was when the Antarctic Empire really started. With a frail old woman gifting him a simple silver crown, as he sat surrounded by the gifts of his people.

"Thank you." Phil said, and she only nodded, looking at Phil with a new sort of respect.

"You're young. And you're full of potential. But you're a good man." She said, Phil nodding back. He was only 24, at that time, and he had the achievement of getting past the dragon, of releasing magic into the world, and making a safe place for others to escape to. "I think, it's about time you start realizing what there is."

Phil looks to the pile of letters at his feet, and nods. She knows that he understands.

The next day, as Phil walks around with his wings out, a small crown upon his head, someone suggests building a castle at the top of the mountain, where he lives.

He agrees, and with that agreement, he also agrees to so much more.

The town really grows then, as construction starts up on the castle. More and more people flock to the cold biome, as stories travel around of a new kingdom, ruled by the man who defeated the End.

Soon, the single town that Phil had visited only a while ago turns into a city, communities and streets built around the base of the mountain, covering the terrain with life and construction.

Soon, as the building of Phil's castle is done, tall, strong and full of people loyal to him, the cities have grown in a kingdom, and towns are named, stories are passed, and Phil is declared the ruler of it all.

He takes it in stride.

From there, it only continues, borders are placed, and then moved, as the land only continues to grow, all technically his. The entire snowy biome, the centerpoint being the mountain where it started, all is his.

Systems are set up, and Phil plans, writes, and the realms know the day it is announced, this place is Phil's, and these people are under his protection. And he *will* keep it safe.

So years pass, and he only grows, with more respect, more land, more people and power, until one day, he's sitting in a meeting room, in the halls of his castle, filled with people who respect him and follow him, who tell him of how his kingdom is flourishing.

Life as a king, though, is lonely, at times. And while Phil had his own family, once, they've been long gone before he even started the trip to the End. Before all of this.

And even with the people loyal to him, listening to his word, the halls of the castle can still be empty at times, with how big it is, and at those moments, Phil walks down silent, grand halls, almost hating how loud his footsteps are compared to the lonely silence.

And the universe is kind, because as one day, when Phil comes down from the castle, head hidden and wings tucked away, walking through his streets, that's when he finds them both.

Two kids, bright and curious, sitting at the corner of the street. One sings a song Phil doesn't know, the other silently holds out a hat for change, sitting on the ground beside the first kid.

Their clothes are old and worn out, loose on them, and not nearly enough to keep out the cold properly. They have a peculiar look to them, said look being their pointed ears, and matching light pink hair.

It's peculiar, but also not, because with Phil's rule, he's seen similar things before, and he can only assume with the release of magic, it also created certain features in people, certain abilities and certain...looks.

Phil drops a coin into the hat, and is glad to see that there's already a pile of coins in the hat, but a bit worried as to why they would need to ask for money in the first place.

"Singing for money?" Phil asks, the kid on his feet nodding, swiping his pinkish hair off his face. "What're you going to use the money for?"

"Food, probably." The kid answers, and the one sitting on the ground holds the hat close to his chest, looking up at Phil with wary eyes. "Maybe some new shoes, if we have enough."

Phil nods, slowly, and looks down to the kids feet. The one standing and singing has old, torn up shoes, looking like they're about to fall apart. The other one doesn't have shoes at all, barefoot out on the freezing street, and that just makes Phil concerned.

"Where are your parents?" Phil asks, and he already knows the answer, from the state they're both in. Wherever they are, they're not with their kids.

The first kid shrugs, and Phil notes that the other one is a bit quiet, only giving a stare. "Dunno. It's just been me and Techno for a long time. We're twins."

“I’m older.” Techno speaks up, hugging the hat full of money to his chest, Wilbur looking down at him with a scrunched up face.

“No you’re not.”

“I am.” Techno nods, sounding incredibly sure.

“We’re *twins* , so we were born at the same time-”

“I was probably born first.”

“You don’t even *know*- ”

Phil huffs at their slight bickering, shaking his head. “My name is Phil. Do you guys have a place to sleep for tonight?”

They both pause, looking to each other and seeming to talk almost telepathically, before Techno speaks up. “No.”

Wilbur doesn’t add on, Techno only glancing at him, Wilbur looking with wide eyes, keeping his lips sealed.

Phil nods, looking down the street, up the mountain to the castle. It looks small from here, the town being far, and Phil had flown down, since the roads being made up were still relatively new.

“Would you like to come with me? I can give you a home, if you’d like.”

They both glance at each other again, looking at Phil with a new light in their eyes, and Wilbur grabs Phil by the hand suddenly, as if he's keeping Phil from running off. Phil doesn't pull away.

Techno gets to his feet, and holds onto Wilbur's hand, holding the hat of money in his other arm.

"I suppose I'll take that as a yes?" Phil asks, smiling a bit.

"Mhm-hm." Wilbur nods, and Phil nods with him, pulling the two of them along, down the street. They only make it a few steps before Phil stops, looking down at them.

"What?" Wilbur asks, seeing Phil's face, eyebrows furrowed.

"Techno, right?" Phil asks, Techno shoulders tensing up, giving a quick nod. "Can I carry you? Your feet..."

Phil glances down to Techno's feet, no shoes to be found to protect him from the freezing street.

Techno looks like he's about to disagree, but Wilbur yanks at his hand, turning his head to his twin. "Let him carry you." Wilbur says quietly, and he nods as if he's said something more.

Techno stares at Wilbur with a thoughtful face, but then nods, looking up to Phil again. "Okay."

So then Phil carries Techno in one arm, and leads Will on with the other, the three of them walking down the street, a few people giving a glance, but with the hood over Phil's head, not much attention is given.

Techno holds his arms around Phil's neck, looking ahead with a stern face, most likely wondering as to where they're going. Wilbur gives Phil glances as they walk along, and when they get to the end of the town, to the barren road leading up the mountain, workings of construction at the sides, Wilbur only keeps looking at Phil with a confused face.

When they're far enough, with hardly anyone around, Phil stops, Wilbur turning his head this way and that way, confused as to why they've gone so far from the actual town.

Phil lets go of Wilbur's hand, and Wilbur only squeezes on tighter, giving a panicked face.

"I just need to take off my coat." Phil says, Techno giving him a perplexed face, while Wilbur takes a moment to let go.

Phil struggles a bit to remove his coat, pulling down his hood and slipping his arm out of his sleeve, not wanting to put Techno on the ground because now there's actual snow on the street here, and there's no way Phil is putting him down without any shoes on.

"You have wings!" Wilbur yells, as Phil maneuvers Techno onto his other arm, letting his coat fall off his arm onto the ground. He has more coats, he can leave it.

Techno grabs at Phil's shirt, tilting his head over Phil's shoulder and looking with wide eyes at Phil's back, where his wings open up, stretching out as Will gives another excited scream.

"You're-" Techno cuts himself off, looking at Phil's wings with shock, and that's the most emotion he's seen from the kid in the past twenty minutes.

"You're the king!" Wilbur says for Techno, taking a step back as he watches Phil's wings spread out.

Phil nods, grinning at how they both sound. "Excuse me, uhm-" Phil waves a hand over, leaning down a bit and fumbling because he realizes he never got the other kid's name.

“Wilbur.” Techno supplies, and Phil smiles, holding an arm out to Will.

“Wilbur, come here.”

Wilbur runs over, and Phil picks him up as well, holding him in his other arm. Wilbur wraps his arms around Phil’s neck, looking over his shoulder at his wings in awe, while Techno holds on to Phil’s shirt and Wilbur’s arm, seeming to already know where this is going.

“Alright. Are either of you afraid of heights?” Phil asks, and it’s a bit of dumb question, but he wants to ask it anyway, just to give them both a heads-up.

“Heights?” Wilbur repeats, and Techno gives a quick shake of his head, smiling.

“Nope. Let’s go.” He says, and there’s a gleam in his eyes as he grins, Phil matching his smile.

“Alright. Hold on.” Phil tells them, then spreads out his wings once more, and *flies* .

Wilbur shrieks when they go up. Techno laughs.

Phil brings them back to his castle, has a room set up for them, and while the servant in front of him gives a surprised face at seeing the kids in his arms, she still goes off to carry out his request.

Phil gives them his undivided attention for the rest of the day, has all his meetings pushed back, tells everyone that unless it’s life threatening, then leave him alone, because he’s busy.

He gets them a bath, gets new clothes made, gets food, gets *shoes* , although, as they walk around in living quarters of the castle, the floors are mostly carpet, so the shoes aren't as necessary as before.

But their reactions when he offers them are priceless.

And he spends the midday sitting on the floor of their new room, as Techno pokes around, and Wilbur asks questions, curious as he watches Techno go around the room.

“And you're the king?” Wilbur asks, leaning his palms down onto Phil's leg, who sits down on the carpet with his legs criss crossed.

“Yes.”

“And you do have wings, like everyone says.” Wilbur nods a chin to Phil's wings, which rest on his back, out in the open.

“Yup.”

“Okay, but where's your crown?”

“I don't wear it when I go visit the town. It makes people notice me.”

“Don't you want to be noticed?” Techno asks, turning around to him and Wilbur, a pillow in his arms.

“Sometimes I don't.” Phil shrugs. “The attention can be a lot.”

Techno nods slowly, like he's been given new wisdom, and Wilbur pats at Phil's knee again.

"Can I see your crown?" Wilbur asks, Phil smiling.

And as night falls, with Phil letting the two of them play with his multiple crowns, things of extreme respect, and meaning, Phil only laughs as they both try them on, Techno choosing to keep a certain one on his head and refusing to take it off.

Phil doesn't retreat into his own room that night, and falls asleep with two kids snoring away at his side, royal crowns thrown to the side.

Word travels fast within a few days of the kids in the castle, and rumors swirl and stick. Before long, people assume Phil's taken in two sons, both of age 7.

He doesn't say otherwise, and he only smiles warmly when people refer to the two of them as the little princes.

The kingdom grows, and with it, so does Techno and Will, Phil watching over them both. And the moments that come along with the year are everything to Phil.

A week into having Techno and Wilbur in the castle, Phil finally retreats some of his attention from them, and returns to his responsibilities. He puts a babysitter in charge while he goes off to his first meeting of the day, and instructs for the two twins to stay, for he has things to do while being a king.

He leaves them in the living quarters, with their things, hoping they won't be too bored while he's gone.

Ten minutes into his first meeting, there's a knock at the door of the room, and the people at the table turn their heads as the guard outside announces that the king's sons are demanding to be let in.

"One is threatening me with a sword, your majesty, I just had to let them in." The guard says with a grin, opening the door with Wilbur running in, Techno walking past with a stern look and a small fake sword in his hand.

Techno's taken a liking to that sword, him and Wilbur playing with matching ones, and he never lets it go, just like the crown upon his head. Phil lets him keep it.

Wilbur, on the other hand, also has a crown similar to Techno's, but he only wears it to match his twin, rather for the liking Techno has taken to his. While Wilbur doesn't have something he carries around all the time, like Techno and his sword, he does have a habit of holding Techno's hand and tugging him around.

The two of them barely even pay attention to the people sitting around the meeting table, instead run directly to Phil, who asks what happened to the person watching over them.

"We locked them in the bathroom." Wilbur responds, resting his hands on Phil's leg, smiling like he hasn't done a thing wrong while Techno goes behind Phil's chair, sticking a hand into Phil's wings.

From that instance on, Phil just let the two of them follow along, and they trailed behind him as he did his duties. It became a common sight for the two of them to be talking amongst themselves behind Phil, or underneath his chair at times, snickering and playing small games as Phil carried out his responsibilities.

Two weeks into having them in the castle, Phil decides to let them sleep in their room on their own, going back to his own bed just down the hall.

At first, it's alright, and Phil actually enjoys being able to sleep without having small feet kicking him in the middle of the night.

Then, on the third night, the two of them come to Phil's room, Wilbur poking him awake. Phil raises his head to see Wilbur standing beside his head, holding onto Techno's hand.

"Techno had a nightmare." Wilbur says simply, and Phil's heart squeezes at Techno's face, at how he stares at the floor with a frown, his face wet from tears.

Phil lifts his blanket up, and they both crawl in.

He holds them both for a while, Wilbur hugging Techno, shoving his face into Techno's shoulder as Techno stares at Phil's shirt.

"My head won't be quiet." Techno mumbles, Phil opening his eyes to see Techno's ears twitch, his face looking unhappy.

Phil runs a hand through Techno's hair, reassuring and consistent, and Wilbur only shoves his face more into Techno's shirt, his arms tightening around him.

Wilbur hums a song that Phil doesn't know, and Techno falls asleep to it within minutes. Then Wilbur drifts off as well, and Phil hugs them both close, closing his eyes with them.

Wilbur, at one point, asks if he can figure out how to change his hair color.

"What color would you want it?" Phil asks, the three of them sitting for dinner, the table is huge, with plenty of food, and even this long in, sometimes the two of them still take a double take at the amount of it.

“I dunno. Brown?” Wilbur shrugs, stabbing at his food with a fork.

“We won’t match anymore.” Techno says from beside Will, although their hair already tells them apart. Wilbur had his cut short a while ago, while Techno wanted his to stay long. Phil usually braided it for him, since he has experience with his own long hair. Right now it sat in a short ponytail behind Techno’s head, pulled back neatly with a few strands hanging in front of his face.

“We’re still twins, though. Looking different won’t change that.” Wilbur pointed out, Techno making a ‘hmmn’ sound before putting food into his mouth.

“I’m still older.” He says through a mouthful of food, and as Phil tells him to chew before speaking, Wilbur slams a hand onto the table, yelling loudly.

“We’re TWINS!”

Wilbur gets his hair dyed a week later, dark brown. His face and Techno’s are still similar, though, and while it takes a moment to realize it, you can tell if they’re twins by observing their features.

Time passes quickly, and Phil doesn’t mind it at all, as his rule grows, so does his sons, and by the time a whole year has passed since he’s brought them home, his kingdom has grown into an empire.

They celebrate the day with no meetings, just the three of them and some cake. Wilbur declares it their birthday, because they don’t remember the actual day, and Techno agrees with it, Phil smiling and enjoying their prideful faces when he asks how it feels to be eight.

“I feel old.” Techno says with frosting on his face, and as Phil wipes it off with a towel, Wilbur laughs, poking at his cake slice with his fork.

There’s a knock at the door, swinging open before Phil can even say anything. His face drops into a displeased frown, and both Wilbur and Techno snicker at his serious face being directed towards the guard outside.

“ *What* . I’m trying to celebrate my sons’ birthday.” Phil says, the guard wilting under his stare, shaking their head.

“I- Your Grace, I-I’m sorry, but-”

Phil freezes as he’s told the news, and Wilbur and Techno look to him with wide eyes.

War has been declared onto the Antarctic Empire, and attacks are being made.

Family isn't always entirely blood

Chapter Notes

it is 5 am, my kidssss

(and guess who didn't FUCKING sleep)

((ME))

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

From what Tommy's been told, from what he's gotten when he asks, him and Tubbo were born into a time of war. A far off kingdom in over their head, choosing to take on the empire, the ruler apparently simply wanting to challenge the emperor and his subjects for fun.

The war wasn't something to scoff at, the Antarctic Empire against an old, large kingdom that's adapted to the new world, and while most would think that they would've been defeated easily to the Empire's forces, they held up, and they caused as much damage as they could while they did.

The king of the other kingdom had apparently been convinced that Phil didn't deserve his power, didn't deserve his title, and so, for fun, attacked his people and his land. Phil acted accordingly, and fought back, but also tried his best to protect those in his rule.

The war hit hard, and resources went low. Attacks on stray towns weren't that uncommon, refugees from other parts of the kingdom became a common sight, people struggled in day to day life as food went scarce, and the defenses weakened bit by bit, every day, as the battle raged on. It seemed as if it would never end, and while the Emperor ordered on his soldiers and reassured his people, everyone could only wonder how far he could protect them until he couldn't any longer.

Tommy wouldn't really know much about that part though, he was young. People lost a lot during that time, and Tommy and Tubbo lost their parents.

Or their parents lost them, maybe. It doesn't matter, either way, him and Tubbo showed up at the orphanage within the same time, within the same time of war, two newborns at the doorstep, taken in.

Him and Tubbo were born into war, but they never saw the brunt of it, because as Tommy has been told multiple times, he was born into the start of a war, but grew up in an era of peace. Lucky, according to most. They were part of a lucky generation who only knew of the war through stories.

Tommy was only two when the war came to a peak, and he was only two when an entire town at the edges of the empire was burnt to the ground, no survivors left alive, a clear threat from the other side to either surrender, or they'll do it again and again until Phil broke.

Fear spread through the kingdom, and rumors came from the castle, the people talking over how their emperor, giving orders from the castle, was trying to protect his people while also raising his two sons, ten years of age. The rumors said that their emperor was falling apart.

There were whisperings of how the emperor wept for hours on end in grief, and as a response, the castle entrance was adorned with piles upon piles of flowers. The front gates were filled with color, the people taking flowers and placing them at the front of the castle, as a show of silent support.

Flowers are hard to come by in such a cold kingdom, and they don't grow by themselves. They take work, time, and once they are fully grown, putting them outside isn't much of an option if you want them to last.

And yet there were so many, and when Phil looked out at his gates to see the ocean of colors, standing out brightly against the snow, he could only drop to his knees and cry again.

So then his grief turned into anger, into cold determination.

Tommy was only two years old, a kid being taken care of at the orphanage, when the Emperor joined his soldiers at the battlefield and won a fight. And won another, and yet another, over and over.

And when his own soldiers couldn't fight on at his speed, he went on his own, and flew to the other kingdom with a sword in his hand, ready to get peace one way or another.

It was inhuman, in the way that he didn't stop, three days of nonstop fighting, Phil was never seen taking a break, only defending, and advancing, and yelling for the other side to leave and never come back.

Tommy was two years old when the Emperor of the Antarctic Empire secured peace by flying to the king on the other side, and with his wings spread high and his sword pointed out, he demanded for the fighting to stop, or else he would burn the castle to the ground like they did to his own people.

From there, Tommy grew up in a time of peace.

And he's never known much more, other than the fact that the emperor was a fucking *badass*.

“*Dammit- Tubbo!*” Tommy nearly lets the wooden crate in his hands tip over, the jars in it clinking together as he holds one hand to his chest, wincing at how his finger stings and trying to not let the crate fall over onto the ground. “I’m gonna drop it, oh my god-”

“Hold on!” Tubbo rushes out from the store doorway, hopping down the steps over to Tommy, grabbing the crate and helping Tommy put it down gently, sighing when they both take their hands away from it without anything falling over.

“What, what happened?” Tubbo asks, glancing over the jars to see if any have cracked before raising his head to Tommy.

“My finger got in between the crates.” Tommy mutters, holding his hand out for Tubbo to look at, and he freezes at seeing red trail down his middle finger, down his palm. “Ooooh, that’s not good.”

Tubbo leans over, pushing his hand away from the crates. “Don’t get it on the jars! I think there’s probably bandaids by the front counter-”

“You care about the jars more than me?!” Tommy yells, holding his hand out away from the crates, making a face at how blood drips down onto the snow below their feet. God, this hurts like a bitch.

“Well, I mean, we have an hour left to move these, man, and like, if we don’t finish, we don’t get our money-” Tubbo responds, grinning as he walks around the crates, reaching for Tommy’s hand to get a look.

Tommy waves Tubbo off, going over to the steps into the store to look for the bandaids Tubbo mentioned.

“No, no, I understand, glass jars are just so much more valuable than your best friend, obviously.” Tommy snarks, the wide smile on his face betraying how he’s trying to sound offended. Tubbo only rolls his eyes before turning his attention to the crates again, heaving one up in his arms, trusting for Tommy to take care of himself.

A pro of being one of the older kids in the orphanage, with a good track record of hiding their more... chaotic, accidents from the caretakers, is that the two of them are trusted with their own safety, are seen as “responsible”, and are allowed out into the town. (On a curfew, unfortunately, but it’s still better than nothing)

And while they are far from responsible, and, being safe really, they take that freedom with both hands, and use it to the best of their abilities.

According to the caretakers, Tommy is a bit loud, but a sweet kid. Tubbo's sorta quiet, and awkward, but he's polite.

According to Tommy, he *knows* that he's an annoying fucker, and the amount of times he's thrown snowballs into people's faces just to piss them off, god, he's lost count. Tubbo's polite, sure, that part is somewhat true, and yet also not, because Tommy will never forget the time that he had to drag the teen by the shirt to try and get him to stop yelling about the rarity and beauty of bees to some person who apparently hated bugs. That was a fun night. He had thrown *two* snowballs at someone's face that night.

Going around causing trouble isn't a usual goal for them when they're allowed out in the town though, (not usually, at least) and in order to spend their time, they go to the main plaza of the town, where there's stalls and tables, places to try food and sit by warm fires.

However, in order to have any actual fun, you need to have money to buy actual things. So most of their time outside consists of taking up any random jobs that anyone will give them.

Either it's sweeping a set of stairs, shoveling snow, or helping with restocking, both their faces are familiar around the main shops of the town, and the shop owners at this point know they can depend on them to finish up any tedious work, and in return, they'll get paid, either through some food, trinkets, or actual money.

For today, he and Tubbo were able to get out almost right after breakfast at the orphanage, (In Tommy's opinion, that food tasted like cardboard), and they spent their morning running down the street and looking for any small jobs.

They found them easily enough, and as of right now, they're working on moving heavy wooden crates full of glass jars holding different types of jams. It's annoying having to go out into the cold alleyway, pick the crate up, try not to trip on the few steps up to the doorway, and move through the small store to put the items in the backroom, but it's worth it if it means the reward will let them have a nice day at the plaza.

Tommy has no idea why the shop owner decided to trust them with *fragile* crates, of all things, but he isn't complaining, as long as they get some money.

He walks through the small store with a whistling tune coming from his mouth, going around behind the counter and looking through the drawers, trying to keep his hand from dripping blood everywhere. It's not like he's bleeding out, and it'll lessen eventually, but it still stings and he'd rather have it patched up instead of leaving faint bloodstains on the crates.

"Tubbo, where did you say were the bandaids, again?" Tommy asks, as Tubbo walks in with a crate held carefully in his arms, his chin placed on top of the crate as he slowly walks over to the backroom.

"Uh, I dunno. Somewhere around there." Tubbo responds, giving as best of a shrug as he can with his arms full.

"Very helpful, Tubbo." Tommy deadpans, Tubbo only laughing as he goes to put the crate away.

Tommy looks through three different drawers, finding only papers, pencils, and a stray pair of glasses before seeing a few bandaids scattered at the bottom of the last drawer.

He grabs it, closing the drawer and pushing himself on top of the counter, swinging his legs lightly as he tries to rip the adhesive off. It's nearly impossible, though, because he's only using one hand, and he really doesn't want to touch anything with his other one, because there's blood all over it from him closing it into a fist to try and keep it from dripping.

It's so bad, and it looks so much worse than it actually is, which would be amusing if Tommy wasn't fighting to get this damn bandaid to work with him-

Tubbo comes out from the backroom, glancing to the openside door leading out to the alleyway, before making a beeline to Tommy around the counter. He swipes the bandaid out of Tommy's hand, standing to the side so Tommy won't kick him with his restless legs.

"Hey! I was trying to use that." Tommy protests, Tubbo only giving a vague noise of agreement, pulling the bandaid open and holding a palm out with a smile. Tommy gives him

an unimpressed face with as much distaste as he can muster, but he still lets Tubbo look over his finger, wrapping it as well as he can with it being all gross.

“Aw, ew, your hand is all bloody.” Tubbo wrinkles his nose at the sight, wiping his fingertips on his pants.

“Yeah, yeah, shut up or else I’ll wipe my hand on your shirt.” The cut doesn’t hurt that much anymore, it still stings as Tubbo looks it over, but now it’s just annoying more than anything, and it looks overly dramatic, with the smeared blood.

The front door opens with a ding of a bell, and the shop owner comes in, a polite kinda guy who always has a hood over his ears to keep out the cold of the usual weather. Last he said, he went to run errands while him and Tubbo were in charge, and he’s back earlier than Tommy expected.

“Alright, kids, how are the crates going?” Bad asks, seeing Tommy sitting on the counter and Tubbo standing beside him. He notices Tommy holding his hand up in the air in front of him, and how it looks like he’s been stabbed or something. “Oh my goodness, your hand!”

Bad rushes over, Tubbo taking a step back as Tommy’s hand is grabbed, Tommy frowning.

“Tommy squished one of his fingers in between some crates.” Tubbo informs, clasping his hands together in front of him.

“Then why is there so much blood?!” Bad questions, turning to Tubbo behind him as Tommy yanks his hand away. Tubbo shrugs.

Bad walks past Tubbo to grab a towel, going out to the alleyway and grabbing some snow from the ground, putting just a bit in the cloth, then walking back in and giving it to Tommy, who uses it to wipe his hand off.

“It’s not my fault the jars are so fuckin heavy.” Tommy mutters, rubbing at his palm until it’s clean, holding the towel out again. Bad takes it without complaint.

“Language.” Bad says lightly, taking a step back and sighing, a dirty towel in his hands. “Okay, I think that’s enough work for you two.”

“What?! No, we can finish!” Tubbo protests, moving in front of Bad with a frown.

“I can carry in the rest of them, don’t worry about it, here-” Bad takes a step back, looking through some drawers to the side, the wood creaking as he searches. He opens a second drawer and hums, grabbing a small pouch of coins and putting it in Tubbo’s hands. Tommy hops off the counter as Tubbo shakes the small bag in his grasp, curious at the amount inside.

“That’s your reward for today. Now, shoo! I’m about to open, you guys go play in the snow or something, you’ve worked enough for today.” Bad says, and pushes them gently towards the front door, the two of them not complaining, more intrigued in what they’ve been given.

Tommy leans over Tubbo’s shoulder as they both make their way towards the door, and Tubbo opens the pouch in his hands to find a small pile of silver coins.

“Not bad for carrying those crates.” Tubbo says, and Tommy pushes the door open for them both, the two of them walking outside into the street, a stark contrast from the warmth of inside.

The stone street is as cold as it always is, a few people walking past, dressed in warm layers as they go down the road of lit-up stores with roofs covered in white. The snow falls lightly from the sky, a normal occurrence living here, and Tommy and Tubbo walk down their usual path, already knowing this road and their stores like the back of their hand. The plaza is only a ten minute walk away, and Tommy rubs his hands together for warmth as Tubbo counts the coins in his hands.

“This is actually pretty good.” Tubbo tells him, Tommy humming as Tubbo closes the pouch up again, storing it away in his pocket. “Any plan on what to do today?”

“I’m thinking,” Tommy stares up at the sky, huffing at how the white falls into his hair. He’s used to the cold, he’s grown up in it all his life, but it never fails to be slightly annoying when his ears freeze up and go red. “...maybe try buying those new cookies they were selling at the bakery yesterday.”

“New cookies?” Tubbo asks, Tommy nodding as the two of them step over a ledge in the path, an uneven part that no one’s figured out to fix. They’ve both tripped over it more than once, and Tommy personally hates the terrain with a passion.

“Yeah, there were some in the display window, I saw it yesterday while we walked past, I really wanted some.” They had looked good, Tommy remembers, little square shaped cookies with a pretty design on it. They had looked like vanilla, maybe.

“Why didn’t you point it out?” Tubbo frowns, Tommy scoffing at his disappointed tone. “We could’ve bought some then.”

“I saw them when we were *out* of money.”

“Oh. Well, then, we got money now.” Tubbo grins, and Tommy grins along with him.

Tommy’s sitting at one of the public tables of the plaza, underneath the small roof that protects it from the snow, with a community fireplace right beside him. The warmth from the fire lets him take off his old coat, his long sleeved shirt wrinkled slightly as he keeps his coat resting over his legs.

He leans onto the table in front of him, picking at the bandaid on his hand as he waits for Tubbo to return with treats, the teen having insisted on going to the bakery on his own while Tommy goes to find a place to sit.

The plaza is only a bit busy today, people mingling and chatting around the stalls and shops.

The place itself is built like a giant circle, the outer section of the plaza being made up of stores, purely of sweets and things to enjoy, stalls for selling fun trinkets and food. The inner section of the plaza is more of tables and seats, fireplaces and areas for people to sit and gather around, enjoy what they've bought and enjoy each other's company.

At the center of the plaza itself, there's a small stone statue of the Emperor, standing upon a pedestal, hands resting on a sword, head tilted down with closed eyes. His crown is small on his head, and his wings are carved in a way that shows off each feather.

Flowers are placed at the feet of the statue, and while some are frozen and wilting, there are always at least a few new ones sitting there, bright and vibrant in their color. Tommy personally thinks the statue is really cool, and it's a nice thing to have, to give Tommy an idea of what the ruler even looks like.

While the emperor does come down from the castle to check on his people, he doesn't do it too often, and the town Tommy lives in doesn't get frequent visits.

Tommy finds himself staring at the statue with curiosity, looking over the peaceful expression on Phil's face, and not noticing Tubbo running up until he's slammed down a bag of cookies onto the table.

"*Motherfuck-*" Tommy jumps, holding a hand to his chest. "Did you break the cookies or something? Why did you slam them?!" He yells, Tubbo shrugging with a small pink box in his hands as he sits down across Tommy, putting the box down.

"I dunno." Tubbo smiles, Tommy making a face at the response. Tubbo moves on as Tommy reaches for the bag. "The bakery lady was really nice while I talked to her. We had a nice conversation."

"Is that why you took so long to buy the stuff?" Tommy asks, pulling open the back of cookies, pulling one out and taking a bite of it. It's good, and he didn't expect any less.

“Yeah, her name is Niki, and she also has a brother named Ranboo, I think? And he’s kinda weird, he wears a mask and his skin is kinda funny-”

“Well that’s just rude, Tubbo.” Tommy says, holding a hand over his mouth, his words slightly muffled as he chews.

“Hey, I’m just saying what I saw.” Tubbo holds his hands up, shaking his head. “But she gave me a discount, and I got this.” He pats a hand onto the small box in front of him, Tommy raising his eyebrows.

“What is it?” Tommy asks, eating another cookie as Tubbo lifts the lid up.

It’s a small white cake, a smiley face in frosting drawn on the top. There’s blue frosting on the borders, and Tommy wonders what’s the occasion.

“Happy birthday!” Tubbo cheers, pulling the cake out of the box, sliding it in between them both as Tommy gives a confused look. Their birthday isn’t for another two weeks, this is a bit early.

At the orphanage, your birthday is really just the day you showed up there. Him and Tubbo showed up as babies only a day apart, so they’ve celebrated theirs together every year without fail.

“A bit off on the date, Tubbo.” Tommy says as he finishes off his cookie.

“Yeah, I know.” Tubbo shrugs, pulling out two forks, handing one over to Tommy. “But it was on a discount, and there’s no harm in extra cake.”

Tommy takes the fork from Tubbo, huffing in amusement and pushing the bag of cookies to the side, poking his fork into the frosting. “Happy birthday.” Only two weeks left, then he’ll

be 16, a grand ole number.

“Mhm-hm.” Tubbo hums, and then stabs his side of the cake with a snicker.

“Oh, god, you’ve just killed it, Tubbo-!”

“Ohhhh, there’s frosting on the table-”

Later on, that night, when they return to the orphanage, to their shared room, they share the rest of the cookies while sitting on their own beds, across the small room from each other.

They’re wearing their old, worn out clothes as pajamas, refusing to get up in any way, the floor being too cold to walk barefoot around the room. Tubbo fiddles with the end of his blanket as they talk about earlier in the plaza, with the experience at the bakery.

“No, her name was Niki, I’m sure,” Tubbo starts, catching a cookie from Tommy, who chucks cookies at him periodically, since he has the bag in his hands. “She was just really friendly, you know?”

“What, you think you’re gonna be able to get a job there or something?” Tommy asks, breaking a cookie apart in his hands.

“Well, not exactly...” Tubbo leans his chin on his hand, trailing off for a moment, before continuing. “She asked about the orphanage.”

Tommy pauses, halfway through bringing the cookie to his mouth.

“...What?”

“Yeah, she asked about my family, and I said I didn’t have one, other than you, of course. But then she asked about where the orphanage was, and how to get there, and stuff.”

Tommy brushes off the warmth in his heart at Tubbo easily referring to him as family and clears his throat, waving a hand. “So either she’s overly curious, or...”

“She could be planning on visiting...?” Tubbo shrugs, making an unsure face. Tommy knows for a fact that Tubbo has a charm to him. And if he’s found someone he clicks with, someone he trusts like Tommy, there’s no doubt it’ll end with something good.

“Good on you if she does man, who knows, maybe she’ll take you in.” Tommy shrugs, shoving another cookie into his mouth so he doesn’t have to talk anymore.

“Well, if she does, she has to take you too.” Tubbo insists, leaning forward on his bed. “I’m not gonna leave you behind.”

Tommy waves a hand, chewing and talking with his mouth half full. “That doesn’t matter, Tubbo. Even if we end up living in different homes, that’s not going to stop us from being together.”

Tubbo still frowns though, looking at Tommy with a conflicted face.

Swallowing down his cookie, Tommy goes on. “I’m just saying. *If* she does come over for you, and *if* she does offer a home, I don’t want you to say no just because you want to stay with me. A family is good.”

Tubbo smiles warmly at his words, but he also rolls his eyes and scoffs, laying down on his bed. “You’re my family.” He turns his head to Tommy. “You know that, right?”

“I know.” Tommy mutters, and puts the bag of cookies to the side, three left in the bag.
“You’re mine too.”

Tubbo laughs at his awkward tone, and Tommy chucks his pillow across the room, ignoring the way Tubbo only continues to laugh as he asks for Tubbo to throw his pillow back.

Chapter End Notes

I'm just gonna say it here, but I've been making a bunch of sbi fics, just, y'know, fun ideas and worlds I like to make, and for like the first time ever I CANT FUCKING RESPOND TO ALL THE COMMENTS

There's so MANY, like, HOW IS THERE SO MANY PEOPLE READING THESE??!! WTF

(Then again, I'm used to writing fic for a dead fandom, so I'm not used to, well, an actual alive fandom)

But uh, thanks, I would usually respond to every single comment, like I always do, but there's like 100 unread in my inbox and I....do not have enough energy to even attempt that so-

Thanks for readin! I'm gonna go do homework now.

Give him his moment

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The days of the following week are what Tommy would call ‘the beginning of a fucking rollercoaster’.

Monday morning, Tommy wakes up to getting hit in the face with a pillow, Tubbo cackling as Tommy literally rolls out of bed as he tries to hit back and defend himself, getting tangled in his blanket and hitting the floor.

The next ten minutes consist of brutal fighting, and it ends with Tubbo shrieking for a time-out, stumbling out of their shared room as Tommy launches a pillow out into the hallway.

They end up late to breakfast, and they also get a light scolding from the caretakers, who would’ve maybe given more of a lecture to them both if it weren’t for the fact that two other kids had started a food fight in the corner.

The joys of having 6-year olds in the vicinity.

Eating food at the speed of light and tugging on their coats and boots, both Tommy and Tubbo are outside in record time, halfway down the street with Tommy still cussing Tubbo out for the rude morning.

“It was funny-” Tubbo slaps a hand over his mouth, trying to choke down a laugh, turning his head the other direction as Tommy hits him in the arm, the two of them walking down the street.

Snow falls lightly, as it usually does. People sweep snow off the street to the side, a usual routine that always goes on in the cold mornings. Both him and Tubbo have done it plenty of

times for a few coins, and Tommy will be honest, sweeping the snow to the side is the most tedious job that they could ever get their hands on. But it's always there.

"It was not funny," Tommy scoffs, Tubbo trying to nod with a serious, agreeing face, before breaking into another stifled laugh. Tommy resists the urge to scoop snow off the ground and put it into the back of Tubbo's shirt. "I thought I was getting fucking *murdered* , oh, I think I have a bruise-"

"No you don't!" Tubbo nudges a hand at Tommy's side a few times, like he's actually checking for injuries. Tommy waves him off, leaning to the side, turning his walk into a dramatic limp as Tubbo makes a face.

"I do! I do! I am a victim, here-"

"Oh, quit it." Tubbo snorts, Tommy cackling as he gets shoved to the side, stumbling for a bit before standing up straight, walking beside Tubbo again.

Tommy pauses as he hears Tubbo's name getting called behind them. Tubbo stops too, the two of them giving a concerned glance before turning around, seeing a caretaker from the orphanage running after them, saying that Tubbo needs to come back, just real quick-

Tommy stands outside in the street as Tubbo goes into the orphanage, which is loud and lively at this time of the morning, with most of the kids fully awake and running around.

The front door is left wide open for a moment, and Tommy sees a vaguely familiar woman standing inside, holding a pink box in her hands. Her hair is put up in a loose bun, and her coat looks like it's too big, like she's borrowing it from someone who's much bigger.

He gets a glimpse of Tubbo getting pushed towards her, the caretakers all polite and smiles, and Tommy hates how for a moment, it's so fake, so artificial, just the necessity of being nice

for the sake of it.

But then she smiles at Tubbo and holds the box in one arm, and holds out a hand to Tubbo with the other, and her smile is warm, and when she shakes Tubbo's hand, he laughs at something she says.

The front door ends up getting closed, leaving Tommy out in the street, having to sit on the curb, huffing at the fact that he can't go inside.

He can, there's nothing stopping him from going inside the building, actually, there's nothing stopping him from walking into the orphanage and taking his usual spot at Tubbo's side while he talks with a woman who's here specifically for Tubbo.

But he sees how kind her eyes are towards Tubbo specifically, and he sees how she shifts her weight from foot to foot nervously, smiling in a way that tells that she just wants to make a good first impression.

From Tommy's first impression, from how Tubbo had gone to awkward and uncomfortable to laughing and grinning, she's a good person. And so Tommy is going to let Tubbo have his moment, and sit out here in the fucking cold while the prick stays inside having a delightful chat surrounded by a bunch of hyperactive screaming orphans.

Tommy passes the time watching the snow fall onto his legs, and he brushes the white off, looking at his beat up shoes and the slight tear at the end of his pants. He needs to think about buying new shoes, but instead his mind wanders to getting Tubbo a gift for their birthday.

A thought passes through his mind, lighting quick, and Tommy would almost be annoyed with how fast his heart latches onto it, if it weren't just such a nice idea.

A birthday gift that Tubbo deserves? A family.

Tommy is family, he knows that much, him and Tubbo have something that can never be overshadowed, or replaced. But just the two of them, it's not enough. Tubbo deserves so much more.

Clasping his cold hands together and holding them his heart, Tommy silently hopes for the interaction to go well, silently hopes that this week will end in Tubbo having an entirely new home. Because wouldn't that be one hell of a birthday gift.

Twenty minutes after Tubbo's walked into the orphanage, the woman comes out through the front doors, walking down the street in a quick pace, like he has somewhere to be. She's smiling wide and she has a fluffy scarf around her neck. Tommy watches her go until she turns the corner, and he decides that he needs to find a way to strike a conversation with her, if the week should go well.

Tubbo comes outside into the street with a pink box in his hands, already launching into a ramble of what's happened, telling Tommy of what they talked about, trying to replay the last twenty minutes in perfect detail just for Tommy.

The box in Tubbo's hands holds cupcakes, he finds.

They eat them together in the plaza while Tubbo rambles on about his interaction. Tommy eats most of the cupcakes.

On Tuesday, Tommy is the one who drags Tubbo out of bed, and he takes his sweet time getting ready, even when Tubbo is outside in the hallway, practically weeping and whining for Tommy to *please*, just hurry up, it does not take five whole minutes to put a fucking shirt on-

"I can't hear you, I'm getting ready!" Tommy calls out, then decides that he's actually going to wear the other shirt he owns. "Ah, wait, I like this other shirt better."

“THEY BOTH LOOK THE SAME!” Tubbo yells from outside, Tommy laughing.

They do, actually, Tommy doesn’t own a lot of clothes as a whole, and they aren’t that pretty either. Which isn’t much of a concern to him, his coat is enough to keep the cold out and that’s all he needs.

Either way, he enjoys the way Tubbo slams at the door and yells out swears, Tommy cackling at his frustration.

When Tommy finally does swing the door open, Tubbo has cursed him out enough for the caretakers to be giving them both looks, because being a good influence to the younger kids is something they should be worried about, apparently, and Tubbo’s yelled loud enough for his words to echo downstairs.

They find Niki waiting downstairs with a small awkward smile, and Tommy has to actually choke down a laugh at the way Tubbo stumbles, because there's one way to show off the other side of Tubbo’s personality, by overhearing him cuss out Tommy early in the morning.

But she’s still rather open and friendly, and she invites Tubbo for the two of them to go on a stroll around the plaza, just for the morning.

And when Tubbo hesitates and gives Tommy an unsure glance, Tommy shoves him down the rest of the stairs.

It was only two steps, he was fine.

Tubbo comes running back to Tommy, who spends most of the morning shoveling snow for cash, and he holds treats in his pockets and a familiar scarf around his neck.

He talks about how he was given a tour around the bakery, and he shoves sweets into Tommy's hands, mentioning someone called Ranboo, who he met with a bit of a chaotic first impression.

"The oven was on fire, and somehow, that's a normal thing, with him, Niki didn't seem too concerned, she put it out really quickly-" Tubbo waves a hand, Tommy snickering and letting Tubbo go on, retelling it all. With each word Tommy just keeps raising his eyebrows and grinning, because, you know what, maybe Tommy will just let these people handle Tubbo.

"-but I learnt how to frost a cupcake, and that was *so* bad, Niki made it look so easy, seriously-"

"-he kept trying to sneak cookies to me, and Niki told him off right in front of these two customers, it was so funny, I still got to keep the cookies, they were good-"

"-and he's also not entirely human, too, he didn't show me what was under his mask, but that's why his skin is like that! Because he's a hybrid of some sort-"

Tommy waves his hands, Tubbo pausing. "Wait, what?"

"He's gotta be like, part endermen or something. He looks like it, and also he makes the noises."

"Like the enderman noises?" Tommy asks, and he's never heard an Enderman directly, monsters like those aren't common in town, rare sightings have popped up, here and there, but the empire as a whole is free of them.

"Yeah! Like-" And Tubbo tries to copy the way they sound, Tommy calling him an idiot to his face, and Tubbo scoffs and kicks him in the shin.

They end up having an entirely new conversation over how endermen actually sounds like, which turns into a discussion of monsters as a whole, and then they both start rambling about

the nether, what little they know from stray books and stories.

On Wednesday, Niki comes back around with Ramboo in tow, and Tubbo really wasn't kidding about him being tall and a hybrid of some sort, because he is much taller than Tommy expected.

It throws him off when he finds out that Niki is the oldest out of the two, and he's left making an absolutely confused expression as Tubbo strikes up a conversation with the two of them in the middle of the street.

This time, Tommy comes along, and they go back to the bakery, which is closed just for today, just so they can come over and hang out.

It's a quaint little shop, and there's an upstairs area where they actually live, Tommy's never wondered about the living areas of the small bakery, but as both him and Tubbo are given a little tour by Ranboo, it's what he expects.

There's a room at the end of the hall upstairs, and when Ranboo opens it, he gives a shrug and says something along the lines of extra storage.

But the room is mostly empty, and there's a bed tucked in the corner that Tommy's eyes get stuck on. Tubbo laughs nervously and quickly asks to try his hand again at frosting cupcakes, because last time had been a disaster.

Tommy gets roped in, and he's glad to say that he does just fine, thank you very much. (The frosting is falling off and the cupcake just looks sad) Tubbo seems to get the hang of it by the 15th try, and Ranboo gives a small applause, Niki coming in with food and drinks, smiling wide as Tubbo raises up the successful cupcake into the air.

It's sweet moment, literally, from the frosting on Tommy's hands, and when he volunteers to help clean up with Niki, he finally gets a chance to talk alone with her, Tubbo and Ranboo moving upstairs, to where Ranboo apparently has a collection of small trinkets he wants to show.

"You are taking Tubbo in, right?" Tommy asks, getting right to the point as he hears both Ranboo and Tubbo yell excitedly upstairs about something.

Niki nearly drops the tray of messed up cupcakes in her hands, and she spins her head to Tommy with a chuckle. "Oh, I- well, that's sorta the plan-"

"No, you're going to." Tommy says, picking a cupcake apart in his hands, and shoving a piece into his mouth. "You guys are good for him, I think he would like it here."

Her eyes go soft, and she looks at Tommy with an expression he can't place, standing still for a moment as the words hang in the air. She puts the tray to the side, ignoring the mess that still needs to be cleaned up and instead walking up to Tommy, arms crossed.

"You guys are close, aren't you? He talks about you a lot." She says.

"We're best friends." Tommy nods, Niki smiling. "And all I want for you to tell me that he's going to have a good home here."

"I wouldn't want anything less for him." Niki agrees, and Tommy hums, satisfied with that answer. His heart feels warm, and he won't lie about the certain feeling of excitement burning in his chest, because he knows Tubbo's entirely in denial, and when he gets confirmation over getting adopted, it's going to be great.

"But you," Niki pauses, trying to look for words as Tommy chews on his cupcake. "You and him are really close. Are you okay with him being here, just him? I mean, it would be a little bit much, with you two, but I could take you in too-"

Tommy shakes his head, Niki stopping. It's appealing, the thought of both him and Tubbo living in this little bakery, with two other people who care.

But this is Tubbo's moment. And while it's so appealing, it's even more appealing of the thought of Tubbo having this be his, and only his.

"No." Tommy says, Niki's expression going somber for a moment. "I just want Tubbo to be happy here."

"He'd be happy with *you* here." Niki shrugs one shoulder up, a last offer.

Tommy shakes his head again, smiling. "Nah. I'll get my own family some other day, I want Tubbo to have his own."

Niki nods, and she's hugging Tommy before he knows it, and it should be awkward, really, but it's not. She's just a comforting person.

"Well, either way, you're still family." Niki says quietly, and Tommy nods, hugging back for a moment before taking a step backward.

"Our birthday is next week." He blurts out, Niki blinking.

"Your-" She pauses, then her eyes go wide. "Oh, really?! I don't- if you don't mind, what does he like? Or you too, I could get you both presents-" She stammers, looking slightly panicked, as if she couldn't just whip up a birthday cake within an hour.

"You can get me a present, but it's gotta be this." Tommy holds up a finger, and Niki waits.

Thursday morning, adoption papers are given to Tubbo, and he's asked if he's okay with it, the caretakers looking a bit emotional as they give them to him.

Tommy thinks this has to be the best birthday gift ever, even if it's a week early, because Tubbo's eyes overflow with tears and as he stands in the doorway of their room, papers held tightly in his hands, his heart feels so warm.

Tommy stays sitting on his bed as Tubbo cries at the doorway, the caretakers telling them that Niki is downstairs, but Tubbo hardly listens, and instead runs at Tommy, tackling him into the mattress.

They're left alone for a moment, thankfully, and Tommy hugs Tubbo as tight as he can, Tubbo trying to wave around the papers in his hands, the paper telling everything about him, telling the world that he's a part of a family, a true one.

Tommy has to drag him down the stairs, the two of them laughing hysterically, and Tubbo doesn't need a push this time when he sees Niki, and instead goes running right to her.

And seeing her hold Tubbo in her arms, in a way that Tommy knows she would die for him, it's perfect. It's absolutely perfect.

They spend the day out at shops, Tommy getting tugged along as well, because there isn't a chance Tubbo would ever celebrate something like this without him. Niki buys them sweets and they meet with Ranboo at the plaza, who's entirely thrown off by Tubbo giving him a hug the second he sees him, and both Niki and Tommy laugh.

Niki agrees for Tubbo to stay another night at the orphanage, with Tommy, and they agree to move his stuff, what little he has, over to the bakery tomorrow morning.

Tubbo has his few shirts and pants tucked away in boxes, which are placed at the end of his bed, out of the way, but a visual reminder and confirmation that Tubbo's life has taken a big turn for the better.

It's late night, and the room has a slight chill to it, yet it's warm with the lasting joy from going out and celebrating earlier today. There's a candle lighting up the room dimly, sitting on the small drawer that's in between the two beds at opposite sides of the room.

Both Tommy and Tubbo are underneath their blankets, entirely ready to go to sleep, but instead they chat quietly across the room, ignoring how each of them yawn here and there between sentences.

"It's just weird to think about." Tubbo admits, voice quiet as he stares up at the ceiling, Tommy turning his head to him. "I'm not going to be here anymore."

Tommy snickers, shaking his head. "You make it sound like you're going to die."

"Oh, shut up. You know what I mean." Tubbo scoffs, grinning. "This place is all I've never known. I'm going to have my own *room*, over at the bakery."

"I'm going to have my own room here, once you move." Tommy nods, Tubbo turning his head to him.

"Won't the caretakers give you another roommate?"

"Fuck no, I refuse to have one." Tommy makes a face, and Tubbo laughs softly, because yeah, the caretakers can beg all they want, but Tommy would rather sleep in the hallway on the ground rather than have another roommate.

Tubbo hums, comfortable silence sitting in the air.

“I kinda wish you would come with me.” Tubbo says, Tommy sighing under his breath. “We might be cramped, to be honest, back at the bakery, but I would like you there.”

“Nah.” Tommy stares up at the ceiling. “That’s your home. I’ll get my own some other day.”

“You better.”

There’s a pause, then a shuffling of blankets, and Tubbo slips out of his bed, quickly walking across the cold floor and climbing into Tommy’s bed instead. Tommy lets him climb under the blanket, and Tubbo uses his shoulder as a pillow, the two of them laying there, looking up as if they can see the night sky beyond the wood.

“I’m kinda scared.” Tubbo admits.

Tommy thinks of having a morning where Tubbo isn’t there to wake him up, thinks of a night where he has to drift off in an empty room. It’s bittersweet, but the image of Tubbo crying with those papers in his hands, running into Niki’s arms, it washes away any sort of regrets, and he just smiles.

“Yeah.” Tommy agrees. “It’s a bit scary.”

“I’m going to miss you.”

“We’re still going to see each other like every day.”

“Yeah.” Tubbo sighs, squinting up at the ceiling, scrunching his nose. “But it’s not the same.”

Tommy leans his head onto Tubbo’s. “Well, that’s okay, isn’t it? A bit of change is good.”

“It is.” Tubbo agrees, and he turns over, wrapping an arm over Tommy. “I think, from now on, things are going to be good.”

Tommy hugs him back.

“I think so too.”

Friday morning, Tommy helps out with bringing Tubbo’s stuff across town, the two of them carrying boxes in their arms and making a slow walk over to the plaza, to where the bakery is.

It’s a little crowded when they come in, customers filling up the store, and Ranboo quickly lets them through on the other side of the counter before going to take another order. Niki is in the kitchen, and the air smells sweet. Tubbo leans into the kitchen and clears his throat, and Niki looks up from cookies she was making, a frosting bag in her hands.

“Oh, Tubbo!” She says, drawing out a smiley face on another cookie as Tubbo gives a good morning. “Sorry, it’s busy today, you two can go upstairs, go ahead, your room is pretty much ready.”

Tubbo gives a nod, and Tommy watches as she runs over to the oven while tugging on a pair of mittens, Ranboo yelling out something about a cake.

They walk up the stairs, still hearing the commotion of the people downstairs as they make their way to Tubbo’s room, Tommy opening the door and walking in.

“Well,” Tommy starts, putting the box down on the bed. “Here’s your room.”

He looks to Tubbo, who stands in the doorway, face pinched.

“Oh, don’t start crying-”

“I’m not crying!”

“You look like you’re crying.”

Tubbo laughs, shaking his head and walking in, putting the box down to the side as he wipes at his eyes. “I’m just really happy.”

Tommy smiles. “Good.”

They hang out for a moment, taking out Tubbo’s clothes and putting them away in a small closet to the side, and Tommy hears Ranboo yell out another order, something about cookies, vanilla.

“How confident are you in your frosting abilities?” Tubbo asks, Tommy actually considering it for a moment.

“I’d say, an eleven out of ten.” Tommy nods, Tubbo snorting.

“Okay, sounds like bullshit, but either way, I think we should go help.”

“I know next to nothing about baking, Tubbo-” Tommy tries to say, but he’s already getting dragged down the hallway by the hand, and Tubbo yells out that they can help, and Niki just throws aprons at them when they walk into the kitchen, seeming to trust them with basic tasks.

At the very least, Tommy knows that he's good at mixing shit with a whisk, and that’s good enough for him.

Tommy and Tubbo end up baking for the entire day, and while the morning does eventually calm down, it doesn't make the baking part any easier. Tubbo's shit with recipes, seeing as he has trouble in general with reading, and Tommy is just bad at staying focused.

But they do end up making a whole batch of cookies that are only slightly crispy, and Niki claps her hands together as Tubbo places them onto a plate.

Ranboo actually does end up setting the oven on fire not once, but twice, like Tubbo said he's prone to do, and Tommy's a little impressed at how swiftly Niki puts it out, as if this has become routine.

The hours pass, Tommy gets used to the sweet smell of the bakery, and the customers come in every now and then, dwindling as the sun goes down.

Eventually, curfew comes by, and Tommy has to say bye.

He stands by the doorway of the front door, Tubbo holding the door open. Tommy holds a bag of cookies in his hands, a bit burnt, a bit messy, but still edible, and not bad for their first day.

They talk even as the night gets colder, and the plaza has gone quiet, street lights dimly lighting up the empty place, the stores holding warm lights from the people inside.

Eventually, they both just stand there, Tommy just outside, Tubbo lingering in the doorway.

"...I'm gonna end up passing curfew, at this point." Tommy mumbles, fiddling with the bag in his hands.

“That would suck.” Tubbo hums, but they still don’t move.

Tommy stares down at the cookies in his hands, and thinks about how this is probably going to be the new routine now. He wonders if this means he’s going to end up being somewhat better at baking by the end of the month. Maybe him and Tubbo can bake a cake for their birthday.

Tommy sighs, and he decides to take the first step, leaning forward and hugging Tubbo, Tubbo hugging him back without a second of hesitation.

“I really do need to be going.” Tommy says quietly, Tubbo holding onto the back of his coat with a death grip.

“One more minute.” Tubbo asks, and Tommy lets it be. He can sprint, he’ll make it.

A minute or so passes, and Tommy still holds on.

“...stop being clingy.”

“Fuck you.”

Tubbo laughs, and Tommy lets go, taking a step back.

“See you in the morning?” Tubbo asks, tilting his head.

“Yeah.” Tommy nods, taking another small step back, so he can push himself to start going already. “First thing in the morning.”

“See you.”

“See you.”

And he turns around with a wave, Tubbo pulling the door shut. Tommy looks at Tubbo through the glass window of the bakery, then goes into a sprint, running out of the plaza, through the frigidness of the night.

It's so goddamn cold, and the snow crunches under his boots as he runs, his throat a bit dry as he breathes in the sharp air.

He slows down a few minutes in, panting as he walks down dim streets, and he can see a small group of people huddled to the side, not even around a fire or anything, just in the dark, in the cold.

One of them calls out to Tommy, running out into the street and waving like they're old friends. Tommy has never seen this guy before in his life.

“Hey! Hey, kid!” He says, getting in Tommy's way, and making moves so that Tommy can't step around him.

“Sorry, but I need to-” Tommy starts to say, but an arm gets thrown over his shoulders, and he stumbles as he gets pulled along to the side, rather harshly. He notes that the dude reeks of alcohol.

“Come *on*, help us out a bit.” The man says, and tugs Tommy over to the alley, keeping a smile on the whole time.

Tommy really isn't all that surprised when a knife gets flicked open the second he's near.

However, *they* get surprised when Tommy throws a first punch, no hesitation, jabbing someone in the throat with a loud swear that echoes down the street.

He's never really been mugged before, thieves are really not that common around here, there's hardly ever people that bad around. But he's pretty sure that they're not going to do anything good, to either him, or any other victims after him, so Tommy shoves the bag of cookies he has in his pocket, dodges a weak kick, and swings.

He's so going to miss curfew.

Chapter End Notes

ngl I'm not too confident about this chapter but uh, hope you liked it

thank u for reading

Weird greetings

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The thing is, even with the element of surprise, Tommy isn't exactly the best fighter. Sure, him and Tubbo sometimes mess around, swinging at each other in the morning, laughing and dodging before one of them inevitably tackle the other into the ground, but that's Tubbo, who's shorter than Tommy, and honestly, a little weaker.

Tommy's full of spite, but he's young, and he's going against like four other drunk guys waving around a knife. He's not entirely sure if this is a fair fight, but fairness isn't what's running through his mind when he jabs the closest guy to him in the throat, with a loud "MotherFUCKER-"

The guy chokes and sputters, falling to the ground, and Tommy sends a kick right across his face, watching as the knife clatters to the ground, forgotten as yells raise up.

Arms wrap around him to try and hold him in place so the others can get a hit in, but Tommy just leans back and swings his legs up, slamming a foot into someone's chin, before landing his feet on the alley wall and pushing, getting let go and dropping to the ground.

"Get him!"

"Oh, that brat broke my jaw-!"

Tommy groans as he lands harshly on the cold ground, his shoulder yelling in protest, then he quickly rolls to the side as a boot comes flying down to where his face was just a moment prior.

He tries pushing himself to his feet to make a run for it, but his ankle gets grabbed and he falls back down, getting dragged across the floor, kicking with his other leg to get them to let go.

“I WILL BREAK YOUR *GODDAMN* ANKLES-” Tommy yells, kicking at someone’s shin with every word.

He slams his foot down particularly hard, and he scrambles to get to his feet, only to get punched across his face and pushed into a wall. Tommy stumbles on his feet, raising his arms to block as he sees a guy get into a stance in front of him, the others circling around, cheering on.

Tommy waits for the other guy to punch first, then he leans to the side, his fist connecting with the wall instead as Tommy knees him in the gut, then books it out of the alley, screaming.

He feels the ground sway under his feet, and he tries to brush away the ache running through his shoulder, blinking away the pain and instead sprinting down the street, trying not to trip, turning his head backwards to find that he’s getting followed.

Holding a hand to his mouth, which stings from being hit, he keeps running, hearing yells and swears behind him, and he just raises a hand up and flips them off, before running even faster. They scream in offense at it, and Tommy gets hit in the head with something flying through the air, wincing as he tries to not stumble, moving his hand from his mouth to his head.

He’s not even sure where he’s going, his throat burns with the night cold, and he’s going down an unfamiliar street, running past buildings who’s lights turn on as Tommy runs past with a bunch of drunk yelling men at his heels. He can see some people actually wake up and lean out of their houses, curious and slightly concerned.

Looking at his hand for a moment, pulling it away from his head, Tommy makes a face at the small bit of blood on his palm, before turning his head back around, still running while yelling at the guys following him.

“Fuck you!” One of them yell.

“Fuck *you* !” Tommy responds, eloquently, and turns at a crossroads, snow getting kicked up as he skids across the stone path, nearly falling over in his haste.

Another rock gets thrown his way, and Tommy ducks, then trips, rolling in the snow and groaning. For a second, he thinks he’s about to get absolutely beat up, but there’s people coming out of the buildings down the street, yelling in concern.

Someone yells for guards, and Tommy rolls over, holds his hands to his head, then passes out with the image of seeing one of the drunk guys get tackled by a civilian.

Street brawl, Tommy thinks, before slipping right into unconsciousness. How fun.

Tommy stirs for a moment, blinking his eyes open to the sound of a horse whinny, and he squints through the dark just long enough to make out that he’s on a cart or something, people talking amongst him, before his head hurts again, and he decides he’s not dealing with this, and passes right back out.

“Yo, is he okay?” Someone says, Tommy groaning and squeezing his eyes closed, because those are not voices he recognizes, but he knows the tone of a slightly disappointed adult. Did he get dragged along with the drunk guys to the police? He got dragged along to the police, didn’t he.

“Uh, he’s breathing?” Another guy responds, voice deep. Someone pokes a finger at his head, hesitant.

“That’s not what I *meant*- ”

Tommy passes back out.

When Tommy does wake up, it's to a stone ceiling and a very uncomfy surface under him, and for a split second, he thinks he might've gotten arrested, and he sits up, eyes wide.

Only to find that, no, he's in an office of some sort, and he's on a bench, not a cell bed. Which, reassuring, but not so much, because he has no clue where he is.

There's a desk in the middle of the room with papers scattered around, some shelves to the side with a bunch of books, files, folders. A small window on the wall tells him that it's morning, with the sunlight coming through.

His coat is nowhere to be found, and he sits up, swinging his legs onto the ground, and debating on going for the door, where there's some voices coming through.

Just as Tommy's about to get up, the door swings open, someone walking in as they yell to someone else in the building.

"No, Fundy, keep those two apart, they're going to-" The man stops in his tracks, looking to Tommy with wide eyes, Tommy looking back with the same surprised expression. "Oh! You're up."

"Uh." Tommy says, looking over the man in front of him, panicking just a little as he sees the light armor over his chest, the Empire's symbol in the metal. He's tall, and he has a pair of sunglasses over his eyes as he gives a friendly grin, walking over to Tommy.

"Morning. Or, afternoon, really, you slept in." He says, and Tommy shakes the hand offered to him, eyes glancing out of the open door and seeing scattered people, papers being handed around. "I'm Eret. You're currently at a local precinct, you got brought here after the commotion that was last night."

“Precinct?” Tommy repeats, raising his eyebrows, looking at the armor on Eret before processing a little more. “Wait, what commotion?” Tommy asks, rubbing at his lip and finding that it stings.

Memories come rushing back, and Tommy remembers, oh right, punching someone in the throat, getting dragged across the floor, yeah, that’s probably enough to make some people think he’s part of something not good, starting a fight in an alleyway.

“Ah, well,” Eret starts, twiddling his thumbs together as Tommy looks over his own hands and finds them to be kinda sore. “-according to witness reports, you came running down the street with a bunch of drunk men at your heels, then you passed out, someone tried apprehending one of the men, which turned into a fight, which led to people trying to help out in the fight, which just turned into like, 10 people fighting in the middle of the night.”

Tommy chokes back a laugh, trying to be polite.

“Obviously, there were some complaints. Arrests were made.” Eret finishes, and Tommy notes the way he sighs, half wondering if this guy got any sleep throughout the night.

“Am I in trouble?” Tommy asks, feeling nervous as he scoots back on the bench.

“Yes and no? You’re a kid, from what I can see, that’s why I let you sleep in my office rather than in a holding cell. Although, one guy is complaining over you breaking his jaw.” Eret shrugs, Tommy rolling his eyes.

“I mean, I was getting mugged, it’s justified.”

Eret snaps his fingers, pointing down at Tommy. “Now that’s something they did not mention.” Taking a few steps back and grabbing some papers from the desk, Tommy watches as Eret turns back around, out of the office. “I need to go figure out a few things, do me a favor, stay here, and we’ll get you sorted out in just a bit.”

Tommy blinks as the door gets quietly shut, and he's left in the room once again, left with his thoughts.

Now, there's plenty of things Tommy could've done, should've done, should've not done.

He could've sat still. Maybe snooped around in the papers lying around. Maybe, follow Eret out, perhaps? Anything other than look up at the window and go *'you know what's a really good idea?'*

He goes out the window.

The only thing on his mind is that there's no way he's going to let himself get in trouble for getting *mugged* and also, he had told Tubbo that he would meet him first thing in the morning.

It's afternoon, now. Tommy has bigger worries than the guy with a messed up jaw, that is not his concern, even though he's the one who kicked him.

So Tommy grabs the chair sitting in front of the desk and drags it over to the wall, climbing onto it and looking over the window, glad to find a latch. He tugs it open and feels the cold air come in, kicking his feet against the wall and crawling out.

Thankfully, it's not that much of a drop outside, and Tommy falls into snow, gritting his teeth at the way it sticks to him, Tommy quickly sitting up, brushing it off his shirt. For a second, he wonders who the heck took his coat, and there's a split moment of panic of Tommy not having the cookies that Tubbo had gifted him last night, but he finds them still tucked away in his pocket, a bit broken, but still good. He moves on to walk out of the alley.

It leads out into the street, where Tommy walks out into the open, making a face at the snow falling from the sky, wrapping his arms around himself as he looks around.

“Hey!” He hears, and Tommy looks to the front doors of the building he just came out of, and there’s Eret, seeming to be finishing up a conversation with a civilian at the front doors.

“Weren’t you- How did you just-”

“Uh, bye!” Tommy waves a hand, and ignores the yelling that comes back, instead choosing to run down the street.

He feels panic grow in his chest when he realizes he doesn’t recognize any of these buildings, any of these roads, and not only that, there’s people running after him.

Tommy feels a bit like a criminal on the run, and he probably looks like one, running from the guards as if they’re going to murder him, when really, he’s just lost and not in the mood to get arrested.

“Wait, kid!” Someone yells, and Tommy does not listen, only runs faster, turns the corner, and goes into the first shop he sees, pulling the door open and slipping inside, sighing at the sudden warmth, a grand contrast from the temperature outside.

He quickly walks through the building, a quiet mantra of ‘don’t be suspicious, don’t be suspicious, I am totally cool-’ going through his head.

He seemed to have walked into a small diner of some kind, and it doesn’t seem to matter that he came inside in a rush, because most of the people in here are distracted and huddled by the corner, at the side.

The place is lit up warmly, candle light overhead, and there’s wooden tables here and there, mostly empty, so no one notices Tommy sitting himself down in a chair, eyes glancing out of the front windows, watching the guards pass by, confused and panicked.

Cool, so he’s lost them.

He looks around the place some more, seeing a bar at the end of the diner, some people scattered around, quiet amongst themselves, and a small crowd of people around a table at the corner, invested in their conversations. Tommy can see three different servers sitting down there, and he wonders what could be so interesting that they're not even doing their jobs.

Looking around some more, trying to shove down the feeling of being lost, Tommy rubs his hands up and down his arms, trying to get off the chill of outside, and he looks from table to table, to the few people who are in their own conversations, having a meal.

There's a shady guy with a hood giving looks over to the corner, fidgeting and serious, and Tommy looks back at the busy table, trying to see who he's glaring at.

He doesn't get a chance to really spot anyone important though, because the guy gets up from his seat rather suddenly, then starts to walk over to the table, and Tommy gets up too, not quite sure why he did, before seeing a small glint of light in the man's hand.

There's a split second of Tommy wishing this morning was a lot calmer than it actually is, then he brushes off the thought and rushes forward, eyes going wide as he realizes, yup, that's a knife.

"What the fuck are you doing?!" Tommy yells, quickly making his way over, and the conversation at the table stops, heads turning over to him, but it doesn't seem to deter the guy with a literal knife, so Tommy grabs a plate off of a passing table, then runs, ignoring the way a chair hits into his hip as he rushes forward-

"He's got a knife!" Tommy yells, then sends the plate flying, watching as it shatters against the guy's head, making him stumble back.

People are getting to their feet, and there are screams of surprise as the knife gets spotted. Someone immediately runs out of the diner, and Tommy feels a little glad that he's dragged along some guards outside.

Tommy grabs another plate and sends it flying as people start yelling, trying to push someone outside.

“Phil, go, quick-!”

“Hold on, wait-”

The second plate just smashes into the wall, but Knife Guy seems to be annoyed enough with Tommy and moves towards him, Tommy scrambling to crawl under a table to get away.

He goes to try and crawl out to the other side so he can run, but his ankle gets grabbed at the last moment, and he screams as it gets yanked, Tommy grabbing onto one of the legs of the table to avoid getting dragged out.

Kicking the hand off, Tommy turns around and scoots back to watch as the guy gets slammed backwards, falling into some chairs behind him.

Crawling out from the other side of the table, Tommy gets to his feet to see Eret and some others come in, as well as seeing people try and shove Phil away from where there’s a fight going on. Tommy takes the distraction and runs over to a side door, by the bar.

“Phil, go, get out of here-” A server insists, Phil stammering and watching as a chair gets thrown to the side.

“Look, the guards are here, thank you for visiting, please, for your safety-” Someone else says, and Phil tugs at the thin grey cape around his shoulders, smiling.

Tommy glances back as he pushes the door open, and he locks eyes with Phil from across the diner for a split second, freezing as Phil blinks at him, still surrounded by worried people.

“Actually-” Phil starts, as Tommy quickly runs outside to the alleyway beside the diner.
“Why don’t I go out the side door, so I can make my way back without much attention?”

Tommy doesn't hear Phil, and doesn't hear the agreeing responses, only goes outside and shutting the door behind him, leaning onto the cold brick wall and sighing dramatically into the chilly air, rubbing a hand over his face.

He flinches at forgetting that his face is kinda fucked up, or at least bruised, and he takes his hand away, instead poking at his head, wondering if he did get a cut from last night, with a rock getting thrown at him and all.

His heart is still racing, and Tommy sighs again, groaning into his hands as he tries to wrap his head around everything that's happened so far, and where to go from now on. Tubbo's probably panicking, with Tommy not meeting with him yet. Tommy isn't entirely sure where he even is, because he's never been to a precinct in his life, and the streets around him aren't familiar.

Taking a deep breath in, Tommy straightens up, trying to calm himself.

Then the door swings open and Tommy debates on starting to sprint away, again, but it's just one person with worried eyes and a familiar face, and Tommy pauses, standing still.

"Oh." Phil says, closing the door behind him, turning to Tommy. "You're still out here." He grins, and Tommy stares, taking a small step back, tilting his head to the side as he looks to the hat on Phil's head, confused at where he's seen this before.

Phil looks back at Tommy, and his eyes go wide, taking a few steps forward as Tommy stumbles back a little. "Your face! Wha- Did you get that from inside-?"

"Ah, no." Tommy shakes his head, still confused as to why this guy's face is so familiar, and he wraps his arms around himself, trying to go for a hesitant smile. "This is just from last night." He blurts out, realizing a second after that isn't really making his situation better.

"Last night?" Phil repeats, and Tommy shakes his head, taking a step back.

“Yeah- uh, you know, I’ve just been busy, I should probably go...” Tommy starts to say, taking a step back, but Phil’s face goes stern, and Tommy gives up on running away, feeling like he’s getting scolded.

“Where are your parents?” Phil asks, looking over Tommy again, frowning at noticing he doesn’t have a coat for this type of weather, and he tugs off the grey cape over his shoulders.

“Well, don’t have any.”

“You don’t have any? You’re out on your own?” Phil’s eyes soften, and he goes from stern to concerned in seconds.

“No! I’m just-” Tommy clears his throat. “I was just going to go visit a friend, right now, I’m not out on the street, if that’s what you’re thinking, I have a home, it’s just been a busy morning, or, uh, afternoon, so-”

Tommy goes quiet when Phil holds out his cape, and he takes it from Phil without another word, holding in his hands for a moment, before realizing, wait, he just handed over his cape-

He tries to hand it back, and Phil refuses, grinning. “Don’t worry. I have plenty. You should stay warm, out here.”

Frowning a little, Tommy goes to insist, because he doesn’t want to just *take* something, but he pauses as seeing something shift behind the man’s back, and he leans to the side, eyes going wide when he sees feathers. Tommy stands up straight, staring at Phil, and he realizes why that face is so familiar, why he feels like he’s seen him before.

“Holy fuck.” Tommy says, without thinking, and Phil snickers, holding a hand over his mouth, and Tommy slaps a hand over his own mouth, trying to not stare at the wings on Phil’s back, because holy fuck, this is the ruler of the empire, Tommy just swore in front of the fucking *Emperor*-

“Oop, sorry, I’m Phil. Didn’t introduce myself.” Phil grins, and Tommy squeezes the cloth in his hands, trying to not panic, for like the third time this morning.

“Tommy.” He stammers out, feeling his heart drop, because oh no, the Emperor followed out into the alleyway, probably to talk to him, oh he’s so dead- “My name is Tommy.”

“Nice to meet you, Tommy.” Phil nods, and he glances to the door beside him, voices coming from the other side. “I wanted to say thanks, for what you did in there, that was pretty brave.”

“He had a knife, I-I just thought...” Tommy trails off, words failing him.

“Yeah, he was probably going for me. Not so terribly uncommon, unfortunately.” Phil shrugs, in a sorta ‘what can you do’ manner. Tommy feels like he’s about to die. “Are you alright, though? You seem a bit roughed up.”

“I’m good.” Tommy croaks out, tugging at the cape in his hands and pulling it over his shoulders, trying to ignore the way he’s screaming internally that the emperor just gave him his cape, holy fuck, this cape belonged to *royalty*- “I, uh, really do need to go, right now, thanks for the cape, and uh-”

“It’s nothing, mate.” Phil reassures, and he gives a warm smile, Tommy returning it without a second thought. “See you around, maybe? I visit sometimes, in this town.”

“Yeah, yeah, maybe.” Tommy nods, then steps around Phil, ignoring the way he nearly stumbles and he goes into a run, out into the street, and away.

Phil watches him go with curious eyes, and for a moment he thinks about following, before deciding that he should get back to the castle, and he spreads his wings out in the alleyway, flying up into the air.

Techno opens his eyes to a weight sitting on his shoulder and the blanket being stolen, and he groans quietly in annoyance. He closes his eyes again, sighing.

“Shuddup.” Wilbur mumbles, even though Techno hasn’t even said anything.

“Get off me.” Techno responds, tilting his head, his chin resting on Wilbur’s hair, and Wilbur just throws an arm over Techno and holds on, hugging him like an annoying octopus.

“You get off.” Wilbur says back, and Techno opens his eyes again, huffing at the light pouring in from the window, the way the room runs slightly cold. The fireplace at the end of the room isn’t burning, and Techno tries to remember if they forgot to put wood, for last night.

“You’re the one *on me*.” Techno grumbles, and Wilbur raises a hand up and pats him on the side of the head. Techno looks over Wilbur’s head to find that, yup, he stole the blanket.

“And you’re the one who crawled into my bed, waking me up at a ungodly time of the night, so shut up.” Wilbur says, and Techno just sighs when the arms around him tighten. Looking around the room, Techno does note that this *is* Wilbur’s room, with the guitar in the corner, and lack of swords hanging up on the walls.

He faintly remembers waking up last night to his head being too loud, stumbling down the hall and letting himself into Will’s room, yanking the sheets off of Wilbur.

He remembers Wilbur complaining, but still letting Techno stay, and the humming letting him fall to sleep as Techno held onto Wilbur like a lifeline.

Wilbur hums the same notes now, fingers picking at the pillow under Techno’s head, and Techno looks back over to the window, noting the dim sun and the light snowfall, and his internal clock tells him they’re a bit late for morning.

“Alright, get off.” Techno says, nudging Wilbur in the head. He looks down to Wilbur’s hair, noting that there’s just the slightest bit of his pink roots showing up. He probably has to re-dye it already.

“But I’m comfy.” Wilbur insists, voice muffled with his face in Techno’s shoulder. “Ten more minutes.”

Techno rolls his eyes. One way or another, they’re going to have to wake up, Phil is going to come back from visiting the town soon, and if they’re both not up, they’re going to get a teasing remark about sleeping in late. “We slept in enough, Phil’s gonna-”

“I can’t hear you, I’m asleep.” Wilbur responds stubbornly.

“Wake up.” Techno deadpans, already making a mental list for today. He wants to spar in the training grounds today. His head is quieter than last night, but it’s still a bit worse than usual, and he needs to blow off steam.

“No.”

“I’m going to push you off if you don’t wake up.”

“ *No-* ”

“One.” Techno starts.

“Techno, I am *comfy-* ”

“Two.”

“If you push me off, I’m gonna-” Wilbur tries, and there really isn’t much he can threaten, so Techno doesn’t even let him finish.

“Three.” Techno says, and then he pushes Wilbur off the bed, Wilbur screaming. “Good morning to you.”

They eventually both leave the living quarters, passing by the kitchens to get some breakfast, then the two of them go over to the training grounds, Wilbur insisting on coming along when Techno said he was itching for a fight.

“You want to spar?” Techno raises his eyebrows, Wilbur quickly shaking his head.

“Uh, maybe later. I just want to watch.” Wilbur laughs, and Techno just smiles, because he’s going to end up dragging Wilbur into a fight, one way or another.

The servants talk as they pass through the halls, and Wilbur listens in, Techno just looking straight ahead rather than paying attention to that, because Wilbur has more of a knack for figuring out gossip rather than him.

Once they get to the training grounds, there’s a few royal guards practicing out, and Techno just throws his cape to the side, taking his sword off from his hip.

“Good morning, your highness. Or good afternoon, rather.” One of them says, Wilbur giving a friendly wave, staying back as Techno ties his hair up.

“Morning.” Techno gives, then promptly tells all three of them to fight him, at once.

The guards know Techno well enough to not hesitate, and Techno gets right into it with a grin, swords hitting with a loud clang.

Wilbur stays busy, and walks around the training grounds, observing the few flowers in pots here and there, and goes to chat with the servants that pass through the nearby halls, picking up snippets, stories, that's followed Phil, who's only just arrived at the castle.

"Did you hear of the attempt on the Emperor's life earlier?" Wilbur hears, and he quickly joins in, smiling warmly.

"A what? When?" Wilbur asks, and he gets a quick answer.

"Oh, your highness! Yes, this morning! A man with a knife, when he was visiting one of the nearby towns--"

"Is he alright?" Wilbur asks, and he quickly gets reassured.

"Yes, yes, of course, I heard the attacker was apprehended by a *child*."

"That's just a bit embarrassing." Wilbur mumbles, and he gets smiles in return.

Wilbur keeps walking around, keeps collecting bits and pieces of the story, and by the time Phil has made his way through the castle, back from visiting the town, Techno's already wiped the floor with the guards, and Wilbur's ran over to Techno to tell of what he now knows.

Phil turns the corner at the hall to see Techno and Wilbur far off, and he walks up to them, Wilbur talking into Techno's ear as he waves to Phil.

"-so, the kid then smashes a plate over the guy's head, yelling that he has a knife. Kid is nowhere to be found in the next moments after the guards show up, but Phil leaves soon right after." Wilbur quickly says, Techno putting his sword back onto his hip, narrowing his eyes to Phil as he gets close.

“But who’s the kid?” Techno asks, Wilbur shrugging.

“No clue. No one knows.” Wilbur responds, the two of them looking to Phil, words left unspoken. Phil could know.

“Boys.” Phil smiles, walking up to them both.

“You nearly got stabbed!” Wilbur says as a greeting, Phil pausing.

“Who’s the kid who saved you?” Techno asks curiously, Wilbur nodding very seriously.

Phil sighs fondly.

Chapter End Notes

uhhhh I've been working on this chap for a while, ngl I'm not sure if it's good or not, but I hope it's fun to read? Hope you like it? We are getting there.

I tried my best! :D

Chaotic tendencies kinda run in the family

Chapter Notes

blows kiss for the family dynamic bitches

(It's me, I'm bitches)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“I take it you’ve heard of my eventful morning already?” Phil grins, pulling his hat off his head. He usually only wears it when he goes off to visit the nearby towns, but when he’s in meetings, in the castle, he wears his crown. Having just arrived, however, he doesn’t have it on him.

“Yes, yes, assassination attempt number...?” Wilbur trails off, Techno glancing up to the sky with a hum.

“Four?” Techno asks, only half sure.

“Four!” Wilbur chimes, nodding. “And we’re only halfway through the year, say, if no one else tries to murder you for the rest of the year, we’ll make a new record.” Techno snorts, Wilbur grinning and throwing an arm over his shoulders. Techno just leans into him.

“Here I was hoping I could talk about this delicious hot chocolate I tried this morning, rather than the rude fucker who tried to kill me.” Phil smiles, only poking fun. “Yes, there was someone with a knife while I was at a diner or something. They didn’t get far.”

“A kid smashed a plate over his head.” Technoblade says, narrowing his eyes at Phil, as if daring him to contradict what Wilbur’s told him.

“Yup.” Phil nods, Wilbur raising his eyebrows. He had thought that maybe the rumors got warped. Maybe Phil’s savior was just short. “My rescuer. Although, he was more of a teenager, than a kid, but still. Quite young. And a bit skittish.”

Phil’s mind wanders back to the rushed conversation in the alley. He wonders if Tommy’s at his friend’s place yet or not. He can’t help the tug in his heart, of worry, at seeing the state of Tommy earlier, and he wonders if maybe later on he can find a way to see him again, just to thank him, maybe repay him. He’s sure the kid would appreciate a gift.

“Huh.” Techno only says, Wilbur holding a hand to his mouth as he squints at Phil, taking his words in, processing for a moment, before-

“So you got saved by an actual *child*?” Wilbur asks, Phil holding back a snicker.

“A teenager, Will.” Phil corrects, smiling in amusement, but his words go unheard.

“An infant!” Techno yells out, Wilbur choking on a laugh, doubling over. “Phil, please, that’s so embarrassing, you had to be saved by a twelve year old-”

“Imagine how embarrassing it has to be for the attacker?” Wilbur chokes out. “Getting fucking *owned* by a *child*-”

“Weeeak-”

“Hah!”

Phil rolls his eyes, snickering, Techno smiling wide as Wilbur laughs loudly, a few servants turning heads at the three of them.

“Okay, but, but-” Wilbur waves a hand, gasping for a breath. “Who was he? The kid.”

Phil shrugs. “No idea. Just a passing civilian. Brave kiddo, I wish I talked longer with him.” Phil wonders why Tommy hadn’t had a coat of any sort, outside like that. Maybe he left it indoors? It sounds like a reasonable excuse, and Phil tries to tell himself that’s what it was, but his heart still won’t leave it, and he worries that maybe Tommy had fudged the truth on being out on the streets.

And it’s not Phil’s worry to care about every kid who’s cold and homeless, he has help in place for that, he can send people to do that for him, but he finds he just...doesn’t really want that, specifically.

“What’d he look like?” Wilbur asks, leaning forward, eyes gleaming with curiosity. “Did you get his name?”

“Was he at least good at fighting?” Techno asks, crossing his arms, Wilbur nodding, wanting to know that one as well.

“No,” Phil says, to Wilbur, because he knows very well where Wilbur’s questions are going to go, they’re going to end up in him digging into something because he’s bored. “And no.” He answers to Techno. “He threw a plate, then hid under a table. Effective, but not impressive, I’m afraid.”

Wilbur gives him a face, Techno only nodding, like he knew Tommy wouldn’t exactly be an expert fighter.

Techno turns his head to Wilbur, who looks back at him, and they have a moment of looking in to each other’s eyes, that weird communication Phil could never quite understand, and Wilbur lowers his chin the slightest bit, Techno tilting his head to the left, giving a half shrug.

“I’m going.” Techno suddenly announces, looking away from Wilbur, and walking past Phil, to the exit of the training grounds. Wilbur follows right on his heels.

“Ahem.” Phil turns, crossing his arms, and the twins pause, glancing to each other again, before slowly turning back to Phil. “Where to, exactly?”

“Uhhh,” Techno trails off, his ear flicking for a moment as he thinks. “The library.”

“Yup, we’re going to go research all the other fun times you nearly got killed.” Wilbur adds on, voice upbeat, and Phil just smiles, because, sure, they could be doing that, or they could be planning trouble.

Ah, who is he kidding. They’re both planning something. He knows from the way Techno’s given a lie, and from the way Wilbur added on to try and cover it.

“And to go prepare for your afternoon lessons too, I hope?” Phil grins, Wilbur making a face. Their classes start in about an hour, and the reminder is a silent warning to behave.

“Yes.” Wilbur grumbles out, turning to Techno, who seems perfectly okay with lessons. He always is, Techno is always at the top of his marks, never lost. And while Wilbur is the same, Wilbur just has a bit more of a habit of getting off track, and once he gets Techno in on goofing around, rather than studying, there’s no hope for either of them in making them go back to their books. “But, it was nice seeing you, we’re going to go dig through some bookshelves-”

“I could walk with you.” Phil suggests, taking a few steps forward. “I don’t mind spending a bit of time with you two before I go work.” That, and he’s pretty sure they’re both planning something.

Wilbur opens his mouth to interject, but Techno beats him to it, waving a hand as Wilbur grabs him by the arm, slowly moving them both away from Phil. “Nah, you don’t have to, we gotta go be nerds in peace, dad, I’m pretty sure you have a meeting in like ten minutes-”

Phil holds a hand to his heart, standing still with a smile. It’s not rare for the boys to actually call him dad, in every way, he is their father, but they’ve also gotten the habit of calling Phil by his name, instead. And everytime they *do* say ‘dad’ it still tugs at his heartstrings, even after all these years.

“Yup, what he said— bye!” Wilbur says, then breaks into a run, dragging Techno with him, the two of them running into and down the hall.

Phil just watches them go, shaking his head. He does hope they don't skip their lessons. Then, he'll actually have to step up, but right now, he's sure they're just going to go poke around, ask around.

He fidgets with the hat held in his hands, and goes off to get ready, to change into some less casual clothes so he can get back to the busy work that goes on, for being an emperor.

An hour and a half later, Phil's in the middle of a meeting, a guard leaning in beside him and telling him quietly that the princes have ditched their afternoon classes, instead sneaking out of a window to a nearby town.

It might've raised alarms, with the two of them doing that, but they do things like that often enough that the guards know to just watch and wave, because if they get in the way, Technoblade *will* take it as an invitation to spar, Wilbur yelling out encouragement on the sidelines.

Phil smiles, knowing he's going to have to ground them when they come back, and he's about to just decide on that, waiting for the two of them to return, so he can chew them out, but he pauses, as he realizes why exactly they're going to the town again.

For Tommy, he realizes, and he pauses, tuning out whatever his advisors are saying, as his mind wanders again, to that kid. He can't shake the thought of him off, and Phil swore, swore to himself, he's not going to get carried away, he has enough duties as it is, he can't go worrying over other children-

He gets up to his feet abruptly, pushing his chair back with a screech, and everyone quiets.

“Uh,” Someone says, as Phil stares at the table under his hands, wanting to sigh. “Your Grace?”

“Push back this meeting for an hour, please?” Phil says, giving a warm smile, walking towards the door. “I’ll be right back. Just need to go check on something.” And he’s gone, no one saying otherside, because really, you can’t stop the emperor when he’s on a mission, with that look in his eyes.

Tubbo wakes up to Niki calling him from downstairs, a knock at his door.

“Tubbo?” Ranboo says from outside, Tubbo groaning, turning over in his bed. “Wake up! I thought you were going to go off and hang out with Tommy today?”

Tubbo’s eyes snap open at the mention of Tommy, and he’s only slightly thrown off by the fact he’s in his own room, and he looks to his side on habit, checking for another bed. There isn’t one, and Tubbo blinks, chasing away the pang of sadness and instead yawning, groaning loudly and shoving his face into a pillow.

“Okay, well, you sound awake.” Ranboo says through the door.

“What time is it?!” Tubbo whines, sitting up in his bed, running his hands through his hair. He’s not sure if Tommy is going to come over here, or if he’s going to go to Tommy.

“Uh, like, 12 or so?” Ranboo answers, and Tubbo freezes, holding back another yawn. He practically throws himself off the bed, stumbling in his haste to throw on clean clothes, and he makes his way to the door, swinging it open to find Ranboo, jolting as Tubbo ducks under his arm, running down the hallway.

“Gotta go!” He yells out, not hearing what Ranboo says back, because he’s already down the stairs, walking through the kitchen-

Only to have Niki step into his way, holding her hands out. “Hey, hey! Good morning?”

“Hi.” Tubbo smiles, feeling warm, and not just because of the current ovens baking treats around them. “Morning.”

“Off to go run with Tommy?” Niki asks, raising her eyebrows, walking back over to the counter, where she’s rolling out dough. “Eat something first.”

“Can’t I just grab a muffin and go?” Tubbo asks, going over to a case where some of the orders are held. The bottom shelf holds extras, he was told that a little while ago. He’s free to grab whatever’s there, as long as he doesn’t mind the occasional burnt pastry.

“You can, but grab one for Tommy too.” Niki smiles, and Ranboo comes down the stairs, Niki waving him over for him to take over with the rolling pin. She pats her hands on the apron around her waist, going over to grab a napkin, to wrap the muffin for Tommy in. Tubbo gives her the extra muffin, and she tells him to go grab a coat.

Tubbo runs up the stairs, chewing on bread, half wondering why Tommy hasn’t gotten here yet. Maybe the caretakers got paranoid with Tubbo no longer being his field trip buddy. Maybe he did get back late last night. Oh, that would suck. But Tubbo wouldn’t mind hanging out with Tommy while he’s stuck with chores.

He comes back down the stairs with a new coat on, and Niki hands him a wrapped muffin, gives safe wishes, and he’s out the door, running down the street, towards a place he called home just yesterday.

When he gets there, it’s general chaos, as always, with kids running around, screaming and being loud. It’s comforting, in a way.

But the face he gets when he asks for Tommy, it makes him ignore the kids yelling entirely.

He asks for Tommy. He only gets strained smiles, shocked realizations.

He runs to Tommy's room, their room, once. The bed is empty.

Tubbo leaves the muffin on Tommy's pillow, then *runs* .

"He never got back!" Tubbo yells, swinging the bakery door open, panting from running across town, eyes glassy. "I went to look for Tommy, they didn't have him, he wasn't there-"

Niki is tending to a customer, and she completely drops them as soon as Tubbo comes in looking near tears, actually jumping over the counter to get to Tubbo. She tells Ranboo to close shop, as Tubbo shoves his face into her side.

"What? What do you mean-" Niki tries asking, Tubbo shaking his head, feeling himself get led over to behind the counter as Ranboo politely tells people to get out.

"I should have just made him stay here! He would have been in so much trouble, but right now I don't even know where he is-!" Tubbo cries out, voice muffled as he wraps his arms around Niki's waist.

"Tubbo, please." Niki says softly, pulling him off, kneeling down, grabbing Tubbo's face. "Breath, calm down. Tell me what's wrong."

Tubbo shakes his head, and he's not sure when he started crying, but he's pretty sure it started when he realized his best friend was nowhere to be found.

“Tommy’s gone, he’s gone.” Tubbo says, sniffing loudly, before wiping his hand at his face. “He never got back after last night, I asked over and over at the orphanage, and no one saw him come back, they don’t know where he is-”

“But they’re looking for him?” Niki asks, moving her hands to Tubbo’s shoulders, squeezing tight.

“Yeah, they are, but they still don’t know where he is! They’re going to go to the police in a bit, but that’s in the next town over-!”

“Tubbo.” Niki says, calm. “It’s alright.”

“No it isn’t! Tommy is probably off in a shady alleyway somewhere, doing who knows what!” Tubbo yells, throwing his hands up. It’s not that he’s worried Tommy’s been kidnapped (he’s too loud and stubborn for that), or like, murdered (would probably take the murderer down with him, to be honest), it’s that Tommy has a shit sense of direction, and a habit of making situations go from zero to like three thousand in two minutes flat. He’s going to be a mess when he gets back to Tubbo probably, and then Tubbo will personally throttle him, for Tommy daring to give him a heart attack.

“What would he even be doing in an alleyway?” Ranboo asks, Niki giving him a look, because, really? That is not the question to be asking right now-

Phil flies carefully above the town, careful to stay hidden in cold clouds, careful to move from roof to roof silently, as he trails his boys below, who are moving across the street, clearly busy in their goal.

His first thought was to go check on Tommy, see how he’s doing, even if he barely knows the kid, but he has no idea where Tommy might even be. But Wilbur and Technoblade are on their way to figuring it out, seeming set on spending their time on tracking down the kid who saved Phil by chucking a plate at someone’s head.

They go to the diner first, the one Phil had been at, and they ask around, Wilbur bright and chipper, always more advanced in getting information through polite chatting. Techno is more of an intimidation type of guy, and he sticks to Wilbur's side awkwardly as Wilbur slowly feeds in questions, slowly gets a description of Tommy. Phil says sitting on the top of a building, wings stretched out behind him.

They move out of the diner, to down the street, and they go from shop to shop, asking for anyone who might've spotted him, and Wilbur's easily finding what he wants, oh, yes, blond kid, blue eyes? Maybe ran around here? Yeah, he's a kid we're babysitting, he kinda ran out from under us, man, teens, you know? Cue a strained polite laugh, Techno giving a judgmental look. Wilbur trying to elbow him without the person in front of them noticing.

Techno seems bored through it, and Phil's glad with the way of how easily they blend in with the crowd. Their faces aren't as well known as Phil's, and they don't really go out of the castle publicly, which lets them walk around in broad daylight, with no one any the wiser that they're the two princes of the empire around them.

Phil moves from rooftop to rooftop, observing like a bird, almost, just watching, curious and amused as the two of them keep moving, tracking down where's Tommy's gone, until they finally get a last clue, Tommy having apparently gone off into an alley with a bunch of older kids, who dragged him around like he could be a new friend to tease.

Phil jumps and flies to the top building beside the alleyway, kneeling and peering down, not being noticed as Tommy deals with three other annoying older teens trying to get a rise out of him. Phil frowns, while Wilbur and Techno hide at the end of the alley, behind a few barrels.

"Tomathy, my best friend-" One of them say, wrapping an arm around Tommy, patting him on the head.

"You are *not* my best friend, stop it, I'm trying to-" Tommy chokes, as he tries to run, only getting yanked with an arm over his shoulders. "-fuck off!"

"Rude! But anyway, you're funny!"

“Fantastic, I surely needed that input- hey, hey!” Phil itching to jump down as they start rummaging through Tommy’s pockets, snickering as Tommy swears at them.

“What, what you got in here? You hiding drugs? Oooo, come on, you know I’m just joking- Oh, sweet.” One of the kids holds up a bag of what looks like cookies, maybe, Phil squinting down.

“Literally!” One of the teens say, Tommy snapping as he pushes overly friendly arms off him, reaching out for the bag.

“That’s mine! Give it back!”

“Relax, it’s just cookies.” They respond, Tommy trying to reach for the bag, instead just getting a back turned to him, the bag getting held away from him. “What flavor are these?”

“Give me the fucking bag!”

“Chill, man, learn to share. Honestly-” Phil’s about two seconds from coming down there and giving them a piece of his mind, before the sound of a fist hitting a face sounds out, and someone screams, high pitched, Tommy socking the kid right across the face.

“Bitch!” Tommy yells. “I said to give the fucking cookies *back*!” He yells again, and then emphasizes it with a kick into someone’s gut. The boys try to restrain Tommy, and someone gets hit across the face again, falling to the floor. It’s not Tommy, surprisingly.

Phil glances to Wilbur and Techno, who still hide with wide eyes. They look both concerned and absolutely intrigued, Wilbur more on the concerned side, Techno more being intrigued. Tommy kicks someone’s knee in.

Phil ends up flying away as soon as it's apparent that Tommy isn't going to need much help, having been fueled with pure teenage rage, and he instead goes over to the local precinct, finding the head guard, who looks like they very much need a nap.

"Your Grace." Eret sighs, nodding their head to Phil. "Good to see you alive and well, after, well, you know."

"I do know." Phil grins.

He wants to make sure Tommy's alright, taken care of, but he doesn't want to go and pull Tommy up to the castle by flight, he'll overwhelm the kid, he's already had an eventful morning, by the looks of it.

"Do you think you can find the teen who stopped that assassin earlier?" He asks, Eret raising their eyebrows, nodding slowly.

"Ah...uh, we've been trying."

"Been?"

"Well, he's also more or less responsible for a whole street fight that happened last night, it's a bit of a mess, he was here this morning, but he climbed out the window and, well, I guess ended up at the diner." Eret pauses. "I guess it's a good thing he did that, actually. But seriously, what is this kid *doing*?"

Phil shrugs, actually asking that himself. That explains the injuries, and the 'last night' Tommy mentioned. "Well, I'm saying put that aside, for him, and instead, when you find him, send him up to the castle for me."

Eret looks at Phil like he's said gibberish, and they stay quiet, mouth stammering as they shift papers in their hands, before nodding. "Uh, sure. Can I ask why, though? If that's alright, of course."

Phil hums, then just shrugs, a gleam in his eyes. Eret doesn't ask anymore questions after that.

Chapter End Notes

Phil, upon seeing Tommy start a whole fight: I'm gonna pardon this kid of anything he's ever done and gain another SON

lmao, anyway, I'm tired, I gonna slep, hope you enjoyed! Thanks for reading.

Kicked Puppy kinda vibes

Chapter Notes

OOOOHHH

anyway, hi

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After Tommy successfully had retrieved his cookies, he then went into a full on sprint down the street, ignoring the way his fists absolutely ached, and how his nose was now bleeding.

A few people called out to him when he passed, obviously worried over a random kid with a bleeding nose just booking it down the street, but Tommy just ran faster, until he deemed that he was far enough for those teens to not follow, and he ducked into another alley, glad to see that it was just empty and cold, some snow piled up to the side, some side doors to the shops around him.

A stray thought of maybe not going into another alleyway crosses his mind for a second, because with the current track record, he seems to just have bad luck in alleyways in general, but he's not about to go in some random shop and gather attention over how he's looking.

Swiping the back of his hand against the top of his lip, Tommy decides that he can just stick here for a moment, just a few minutes, before anything else. Today has gone very much south, and he's got no clue where he is, his hands hurt like hell, and also his cookies are all broken, now.

He swiftly decides that the broken cookies are the worst part of today.

Opening up the bag in his shaking hands, Tommy ignores the way he wants to lay down into the snow and groan in pain, and instead just shoves a half broken cookie into his mouth,

chewing angrily. He wants to go home. He wants to see Tubbo, mostly, he's sure that when he eventually finds his way back, he's going to die to Tubbo squeezing him to death with a hug.

He would do the same to Tubbo, of course, if it was the other way around, which is the only reason why he's not exactly worrying over his unavoidable death, only eating another cookie, and wiping blood off his lip when he tastes crimson with the chocolate.

Holding his hand to his nose, Tommy glances at the end of the alleyway, and moves to go further down, where it turns left into a dead end, some garbage bins stacked by the wall. Tommy frowns at the stone wall in his path, then decides to say fuck it all, and sits down in the snow, leaning his back against the wall.

It's freezing, and his hands shake from adrenaline, pain, and the chill that's running through the air. The cape around his shoulders is a reminder of what also happened today, and while *that* was fucking insane, Tommy's not entirely sure how to feel about it, because sure, the emperor was cool as hell, but also his face is still rather bloody, and his knuckles just hurt.

The bag crinkles in Tommy's hand as he fiddles with it, opening it again and taking a small broken piece out, eating it with a sigh. This morning feels like it's been too much, and Tommy remembers that it's not even morning, it's afternoon, and he eats another cookie.

A lot of the cookies are just broken bits in the bag now, and it would annoy Tommy, but he's far too riled up and out of fucks to give, so he just eats them and wishes that he could get back to somewhere he actually *knows* .

The rational part of his brain tells him to try and find an adult, get directions. It's not a childish thing to do, to need help, this morning has been an absolute disaster, at this point, you really oughta get some sort of assistance before you get jumped a second time.

Tommy notes that the rational part of his head sounds a lot like Tubbo, and there's a small ache in his heart, as the adrenaline and anger finally starts to simmer down, and he pretends his eyes don't burn and that his throat isn't tight as he digs in the bag again for another cookie.

He's not crying.

He isn't, his hands just hurt. And he just kinda wants to go back to Tubbo. And wants to be somewhere that's not so cold, preferably.

Tommy sighs deeply, pulling his knees up to his chest and resting his chin on them, just giving up and letting himself tear up, blinking the wetness out from his eyes. He's very tired right now. Part of him wants to take a nap, but he knows he's going to wake up cold as hell, and that would just be miserable.

Picking at the end of the cape over his shoulders, Tommy notes the white design at the ends of it, intricate and beautiful. He wonders how much this thing *costs*, and for a second he's still in disbelief that him, of all people, is wearing the Emperor's cloak.

Well, if anything else, that did happen today. Tommy is pretty sure he's going to end up getting stabbed later on, with his current luck, but at the very least, he'll be able to brag to Tubbo about meeting the literal Emperor, and seeing his actual fucking wings, which, Tommy will silently admit, were so, *so* cool.

Tommy wonders about how he flies, how it must feel. He wishes he could do the same, actual wings might be useful right about now, flying back to Tubbo would be a breeze. Maybe some other day, but that's not much of an option for him right now, unfortunately.

Tubbo's going to freak when he sees the cape, though. A *royal* cape, god, Tommy is never letting this thing go. Maybe if he lets Tubbo wear it he *won't* get murdered the second he comes back.

Or not, Tubbo might still be pissed. Overjoyed, very much so, but also Tommy is going to die at the ripe age of 15, just days before his birthday, at the hands of his best friend being in rage that Tommy had been graced with the bad luck of getting mugged. And then starting a street fight. And then running from the police precinct, through the window. And then being chased by guards, and then throwing a plate at a guy with a knife, who was trying to stab the literal Emperor-

Tommy pauses, realizing that he actually *saved* the Emperor, doing that. Like, sure, maybe the guy would have gotten punched the second he got too close, but Tommy more or less stopped him from causing anything, by chucking a plate.

Tommy takes it back, this is the best day ever, he saved the Emperor's *life*, Tubbo is going to fucking die when he hears about this.

There's the sound of voices out in the street, and Tommy tunes back into real life, sitting up. He twists the top of the bag in his hands, and gets to his feet, pushing against the wall and huffing at how he feels utterly exhausted. He needs a nap. He's going to take a very long nap after this day is done.

"Tommy?" Someone calls, and Tommy freezes, his hand in mid-air, stopping half-way from wiping at his eyes. There's someone at the end of the street, and Tommy thinks he knows the voice, but it's been an eventful day, he's not that sure. "Hello?"

Leaning against the wall with a quiet sigh, Tommy decides that if he's getting mugged again, he's just going to strangle the mugger, consequences be damned. He saved the Emperor, he's having a bad day, maybe he can have a pardon for murder.

Pushing himself off the wall, Tommy stumbles over to the corner, leaning out and immediately locking eyes with Eret, who pauses in his steps, making a noise of surprise.

Tommy stares at him with wide eyes, Eret staring back, and then Tommy turns around and tries to run.

"Ah, hey, hold on!" Eret yells out, running after Tommy, turning the corner to just find Tommy standing with his back against the wall at the end of the alley, trying to make the most threatening face possible.

It's not as effective as he thinks, though, because he's rubbing at his eyes to get the remains of tears off, there's still dried blood under his nose, on the top of his lip, and he holds the bag of cookies in his hands like a lifeline.

He's not intimidating, nowhere near it. He's more looking like a kicked puppy, if anything, a very kicked, angry puppy, but Eret doesn't voice his thoughts, only raises his hands out, like he's trying to calm Tommy down.

"Hey." They say, Tommy frowning.

"What do you want." Tommy mutters, and he then shoves a cookie into his mouth, Eret resisting the urge to make a sound of pity. "I'm having a very busy day, lots of things goin on-" He says, a hand over his mouth as he chews.

Eret smiles, and Tommy narrows his eyes, holding up a fist, the bag of cookies in his hand.

"I just need you to come with me." Eret says carefully, like Tommy might skitter away somehow if he says it too loud. He's not entirely wrong. Tommy's planning on getting past him and making another run for it as he speaks.

"You're going to arrest me for getting mugged?" Tommy asks incredulously, chewing at the last of his cookie, twisting the bag closed in his hands. There's only two left, in the bag, and Tommy's really doesn't want to finish them before he can get back.

"No, that's-"

"Because that's a bit fucked up, I'll admit, I mean, look at me, I'm having a very bad day-"

Eret cuts him off, taking a deep breath in. "You've been summoned up to the castle."

Tommy pauses. Blinks at him, holding the bag of cookies close.

"What."

Eret grins, watching as the wary, hostile fire in Tommy's posture bleeds away, replaced with shock. "The Emperor came by earlier, asking for you." Tommy's eyes go wide.

"What." Tommy chokes out, trying to take a step back, his back just pressing into the stone wall again. "What- why?"

"You were at that incident at the diner earlier today, weren't you?"

Tommy nods, slowly, realization dawning on him. "Holy fucking shit." He breathes out.

"Come with me. There's already a carriage waiting for you."

Tommy looks even more baffled, eyes flicking around the alley like people are going to jump out and say that it's an elaborate prank, he is actually getting arrested. But nothing happens, and Eret just leans back on their heels, waiting.

"How do I know you're not bullshitting me?" Tommy asks, Eret laughing.

"Believe me, I'm just as shocked as you. It's not every day the Emperor asks me to escort a kid up to the castle for him." They take a step to the side, waving an arm out. "But if we can hurry up and go, now, because I'd really rather not make him wait."

Tommy feels like sitting down again and shoving more cookies into his mouth, but instead he nods, and walks forward on shaking legs, ignoring the way Eret keeps a light hand on his shoulder, and leads him down the street, where there are at least 5 other guards joining them, apparently all trying to look for Tommy.

What the fuck.

Once Tommy had gone sprinting down the street like death was on his heels, Wilbur and Techno were left to their own thoughts, staring at the kids who were mostly just complaining on the ground, beat up and tired.

“So, hypothetically,” Techno starts, looking at the kids with an amused look.

“Terrible idea.” Wilbur immediately says, looking at the kids as well, thinking of how they had been so pushy, before they get smacked across the face by Tommy, who’s apparently got one hell of a temper. “We are going to get extra grounded.”

“I wasn’t going to try fighting them Wilbur, damn.” Techno grins, Wilbur raising his eyebrows.

“Of course, you’re just going to scare the shit out of them.”

Techno makes a face, frowning. “You say that like I shouldn’t do it.”

“I mean, of course not. We *definitely* shouldn’t terrorize a bunch of teenagers who just got beat up by a child-” Wilbur waves to said teens on the floor, who are still in the alleyway, sulking and in pain.

“I liked that, that was funny-” Techno grins, Wilbur holding back a snort.

“And I *definitely* shouldn’t encourage you to go on right ahead, because that would be bad, and sometimes, I do need to be the voice of reason.” Wilbur finishes, leaning in to Techno with a hand over his heart.

Techno blinks at him, giving an amused smile. “So?” He asks, Wilbur composing himself, leaning back on his heels and setting back his shoulders, as if he’s about to be responsible.

“Eh, what the heck, come on.”

“Yup, that’s what I thought.”

“Blood for the blood god, channel your inner intimidation, Techno.” Wilbur whispers, the two of them walking into the alleyway, ready to put the fear of god into some teens for the heck of it.

“That’s not hard.” Technoblade responds, smile going sharp, cracking his knuckles.

About twenty minutes later, they’re on their way back to the castle, having terrorized some teenagers by simply acting intimidating and saying more than a few slight threats.

“We’re going to be extra grounded, now.” Wilbur notes, holding a hand out to the snow falling from the sky. The castle is rather far, but they’re having a nice walk, and when they get far enough, they’ll pay for a ride on horseback.

“Why?” Techno asks, picking at the end of his braid, which hangs loosely over his shoulder.

“Wha- ‘*why*’, Techno, I’m pretty sure one of those kids fucking cried.”

“Eh, I didn’t say anything *that* bad-”

“You threatened their entire family.” Wilbur deadpans.

“Did I? Or was that you?”

“No, I threatened their non-existent half cousin.”

Techno snorts, turning his head to the ground. Wilbur grins.

“We’ll be fine, there’s nothing to worry about.” Techno waves a hand, Wilbur rolling his eyes. “I mean, we’re still going to get grounded-”

“Oh yeah, definitely-”

Tommy wakes up to an abrupt stop, finding that he's sitting in a comfy seat, voices talking loudly from outside. He looks up to see the inside of a small carriage, simple and neat, and everything catches back up to him as he blinks the sleep out his eyes.

Right, Eret, the Emperor, the goddamn actual carriage, for Tommy.

“You got to be fucking kidding me.” Tommy had said, upon seeing said carriage, back at the town.

“Dead serious.” Eret only responded, with a grin, pushing Tommy along.

Tommy sits up in the seat, hand digging into his pocket to pull out the bag of cookies, and he debates on grabbing one now, but holds himself off, instead choosing to just hold the bag in his hands as he peeks out the window, catching a glimpse of the huge gates of the castle.

He knows it's the castle gates, not from the giant doors, and the guards placed outside, but the flowers that are scattered around on the ground, to the side, colorful and bright. It's not nearly as much as when the war happened, Tommy's been told, but there's still a few, still enough to tell that there's a crowd who keeps up with this small type of tradition.

There's a small sense of panic that creeps into Tommy's heart, and Tommy scoots back in his seat, trying to take deep breaths. This is totally fine. This is a perfectly normal morning. He's just getting taken to go see the Emperor, not a big deal.

Oh, he feels like puking.

Taking a deep breath in and ignoring the way his heart pounds in his throat, Tommy wipes a hand across his face, hoping that he looks at least a little presentable. Maybe the emperor won't be that upset over Tommy coming here looking like absolute garbage.

Although, thinking back to first meeting Phil, maybe he'll be more worried if anything. He seems like a caring guy.

The carriage stops again, this time within the walls, and Tommy shifts in his seat, hands curling around the bag in his hand, and he really wishes that Tubbo was here with him right now. He would probably know about this, Tubbo tends to know the strangest information for no reason. He would probably know royal manners and shit.

There's a knock on the door, and Tommy turns his head to it, telling himself that he did not jolt, no, he did not. (He did.)

The door opens up and Tommy leans in his seat to see Eret, who gives a bright smile. There's a gust of cold air that comes in with the door being opened, and Tommy might've been a bit chilled before, but now he's *cold*. It's like the temperature has gotten sharper, up here, and he guesses it makes sense, with the castle being up higher.

"Are we here?" Tommy asks, even though he already knows the answer, but he just wants Eret to tell him something, preferably tell him what to do. It dawns on Tommy that he still isn't entirely sure why he's been called up here.

“Yup.” Eret nods, and he waves a hand for Tommy to come out. Tommy gets up, climbing out the door, ignoring the way Eret holds out a hand to help, and instead goes down small stairs, his feet hitting the light layer of snow on the stone ground.

It’s freezing, and Tommy wraps his arms around himself, looking around, seeing scattered guards at their posts, a few around him, apparently as escorts, he would assume.

“Here, come on, let’s hurry and get inside.” Eret suggests, pushing Tommy on the back, and Tommy stumbles forward, nodding. He looks straight ahead as they start to walk, and he looks to the castle before him, head craning upwards as he stares in awe at the tall structure of it all.

It’s not something Tommy thought he would ever be near, let alone inside, and he offhandedly wonders just how cold it is, all the way at the top.

There’s a few voices, and Tommy lowers his head back down, eyes going wide as he sees Phil coming towards him from the front doors, seeming to want to meet them halfway. There’s a few guards following at his tail, and they struggle to keep up as Phil speedwalks along, waving a hand in greeting.

Eret and his group stop, and Tommy stops behind Eret, taking the smallest step as to hide himself, trying to compose his internal yelling, because holy fuck, holy *fuck*, Tommy is literally on the royal grounds and the Emperor is *right* fucking there-

“Your Grace.” Eret greets, giving a small bow, and Tommy scrambles to copy. “We were just about to head inside.”

“Oh, I know, I just wanted to meet you guys out here.” Phil grins, and he talks like he’s speaking to a good friend, and Tommy wonders if he’s always this friendly. “I was just relieved you had found him.”

Phil leans to the side, looking to Tommy, who stares at the ground in a panic, trying to use Eret as a shield. Eret steps to the side though, so it ends up being useless, and then Tommy just panics.

He takes a hesitant step forward, at Eret's nod, and Phil pauses, blinking at Tommy, who's giving a so-so bow to Phil, dried blood still on his face, hands bruised and battered. There's still the bag of cookies clutched in his hands, and there's still Phil's cape over his shoulders. Tommy's shaking, and he can't tell if it's from nerves or from the cold.

Phil takes one look at him, then turns to his guard, smiling politely. "Push back all my meetings for today."

"Ah- Your Grace?" The guard falters, eyes flicking to Tommy for a second.

"And tell that I am to be left alone, as well, for all of today." Phil nods, speaking quietly. Tommy looks at him nervously, before keeping his eyes on his shoes. "I'll be preoccupied."

"Of course." They respond, and they go on their way, Phil turning to Tommy.

"Tommy." Phil says as a greeting, smiling warmly. "Good to see you again."

"Your Grace." Tommy mumbles, picking at the bag in his hands.

"Eh, call me Phil, mate, you don't need to be formal." Phil shrugs, Tommy nodding once, sharp.

"Phil." Tommy repeats, and he still looks so terribly nervous, like he's about to pass out on the ground right there. He looks overjoyed too, though, a smile pulling at his lips, and Phil grins, before looking over Tommy and deciding that he does really need some healing potions. And a better coat, from the way he's shivering. Maybe better shoes?

“Uhm, I-” Tommy starts, pausing. “Hello.”

“Hello. How are you?” Phil asks, deciding to start off with something easy, just to break the ice.

“Could be better.” Tommy admits, shrugging. “It’s been a long morning, or, afternoon.”

“It looks like it has.” Phil agrees, humming. “Why don’t we get inside? We can have a medic check you over, for those hands.”

Tommy glances down at his hands, like he forgot that they were so bruised, and nods again, smiling wide. “Yeah, sure, that’d be nice.”

Phil smiles, stepping to the side. “Come along.” And Tommy goes along, Phil holding a wing out behind Tommy and leading him to the castle.

Chapter End Notes

Tommy: Oh my god I'm gonna make a fool of myself, I look like a mess, this is going to go terribly

Phil, the second he sees Tommy: Yup, this is the one, new son

I was on break for a little while, but now I'm back! Hello. Time to brainrot over family dynamics.

And also I see y'all theorizing who the teens where. If you wanna think of them as the Dream team, oh you may. They don't got much plot significance, tbh.

But ye, thank you for reading. I'm tired, woe

Tommy in castle go br listen I dont got the time nor fucks to give on this chapter title, you know what it's about, it's about dadza and Tommy vibing and being WHOLESOME

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The first thing Tommy really notices about the castle is the sheer *size* of it.

Tommy will admit, he hasn't been to many places in the kingdom. Him and Tubbo, while they were fairly chaotic and liked to run around town, never strayed too far, and after the fourth time Tommy got them both terribly lost in unfamiliar streets, Tubbo refused to walk too far from the plaza ever again.

That's part of the reason why Tommy did not have a single clue on how to get back home. That, and he has an absolute shit sense of direction. Usually luck was on his side when he was lost, but now he's farther from his town than he's ever been before, and he probably couldn't find his way back on his own even if he tried.

A cold pang of shock, and then utter doom hits him in the heart as he realizes this is the farthest he's ever been from Tubbo, before, and he remembers that it's far past the time that he's supposed to be at the bakery already. He has no doubt that Tubbo's ran off to the orphanage to find Tommy, only to turn up with nothing.

Tommy realizes with a feeling of 'oh fuck' that he's absolutely entirely *dead* the second he gets back to Tubbo. They'll both be overjoyed, no doubt, Tommy can't wait to see Tubbo again, but now his days are very numbered, and at the very least, he'll go down with a cool story of meeting the emperor. He's already accepting his fate, he had a cool life, it was good while it lasted.

Phil notices Tommy's slight face of panic and grim resignation, turning his head to the teen, and Tommy just gives an awkward smile, trying to seem as confident as possible, even with the multiple alarms going off in his head. He's fairly sure that if Tubbo and him could talk telepathically, Tubbo would be shouting out his eardrums on where the hell Tommy has gone.

Oh, he doesn't want to think about the whole lecture Tubbo's going to give him when he gets back.

"You alright, mate?" Phil asks, Tommy clearing his throat, nodding frantically.

"Oh, yeah, yeah." He waves a hand, feeling a wing brush against his back, and he screams internally, but this time in a good way, freaking out because holy fuck, the emeperor has *wings*, actual out in the open ones, and that's so goddamn *cool* . His whole head is just a lot of screaming, really, but Tommy will go on to think that he is being the absolute image of confidence. He's not. "Eventful morning. Or, afternoon. Day. Busy day, I've had a very busy day."

"I would think so." Phil grins, huffing, and Tommy can't help the way his eyes flick up to the crown on Phil's head, biting back his tongue so he won't do something stupid, like swear very loudly in front of the emperor.

The front doors of the castle are massive, towering over Tommy's head, and as they go inside, he's immediately pleased to find that it's actually warm, a drastic difference from the amount of snow outside, the biting wind that went right through him.

There are guards at the sides of the door as they walk through, and Tommy stares with wide eyes at the weapons in their hands, at the armor they wear, and Phil gently pushes him along when his steps falter.

"They're just there for protection." Phil says, Tommy nodding, eyes wandering around the hallway as they go down, blinking at the fancy lights that hang overhead. He feels very out of place, with the way Phil beside him is dressed in royal, clean clothes, prim and neat, and Tommy is, well, a mess, really.

"Protection from what?" Tommy asks.

"Oh, you know. Assasination attempts." He says, like he's talking about the weather, and Tommy chokes back a laugh. Probably shouldn't laugh at the prospect of the emperor getting murdered. That's probably bad, he thinks.

“You have those often?” Tommy continues, in the same casual tone Phil holds, and Phil grins wide.

“So far, just four this year.” Phil responds, and his tone makes it sound like there’s an inside joke that Tommy doesn’t get. “Counting the one earlier today.”

Tommy looks at Phil out of the corner of his eye as the hallway opens up to a large room, two large staircases leading up to the next floor. There’s a tall painting hanging up on the wall, at the top of the staircases, visible from over the railing.

It’s a picture of the royal family, Tommy realizes, as they near the stairs, and he can’t help but stare in fascination and awe, taking in the absolute awesomeness of these people just having a whole ass painting of themselves looking royal and fancy as hell.

The painting shows Phil sitting in a chair, one leg crossed over the other as he smiles kindly, a golden crown on his head and light blue layers over his shoulders. Two people stand at each side of him, nearly leaning against Phil. They’re unfamiliar to Tommy but dressed similarly, in a way that gives him no doubt that they got to be royalty too, and Tommy promptly remembers that the emperor has sons.

At least he thinks he does. He’s fairly sure Tubbo’s told him about that before, the princes in the castle. They don’t go out much, though, or at least that’s what Tommy is sure of.

“That’s an old painting.” Phil says, Tommy snapping his attention away from Phil, only to see Phil staring at the same picture, looking fond. “It’s years old at this point, we really oughta have it redone.”

Phil leads them both up the staircase, and Tommy sticks right to his side, not wanting to somehow find a way to step onto Phil’s cape, or shoes, or even worse, his wings. His luck has been generally terrible today, Tommy’s pretty sure he could manage to find a way to step on Phil’s wings.

They walk up to the picture on the wall, and Tommy realizes it's as big as he thought it was, probably nearly as tall as him, and he stares at Phil's face depicted there, before glancing at the actual Phil beside him.

"Those are the princes, right?" Tommy asks, pointing a finger to Techno, Phil looking away with raised eyebrows.

"Yup. They're my only sons, grew up with the empire." Phil says, Tommy looking again at the two of them, at the way Techno's bright pink hair stands out, and how Wilbur smiles just barely in a way that's subtle.

They all look drastically different from each other, Tommy thinks, save for the matching blue colors they all wear, and the crowns on their heads. Phil has a gold one, in this picture, and Wilbur and Techno wear matching silver ones, not entirely noticeable.

"That's Technoblade. He's a bit quiet, although one hell of a fighter, for sure. He enjoys sparring as a hobby, and he's quite good at it." Phil starts, pride in his voice.

"Bet I could beat him." Tommy says without thinking, snapping his mouth shut and pursing his lips as he screams internally.

Phil just laughs, thankfully, Tommy brushing off the slight panic of saying something that might get him thrown out of the castle, because at this point in the day, he really wouldn't be surprised.

"He's more a sword person, although I don't think you'd do well against him with just your fists either, mate." Phil says, Tommy feeling a surge of confidence in his chest at the way Phil smiles at him, and he raises his battered fists, grinning.

"You never know." Tommy answers, and he would definitely take on this Technoblade dude, no hesitation. Even if he's the prince or something. "What about the other one?" He asks, nodding his head to Wilbur.

“Wilbur.” Phil says the name so fondly, and Tommy glances to the face on the wall again, wondering.

“I could beat him too.” Tommy nods, sticking with his burst of confidence, even if it’ll end badly, because he’s cool. He’ll be cool, and maybe telling the emperor he can totally beat his sons in a fight is not the best way to be cool, but he’ll roll with it.

Phil just snickers. “He’s not much of a fighter, but he can hold his own against Technoblade, and believe me, just that much is enough to wipe the floor with you.”

Tommy frowns, Phil smiling. “They can’t be that good.”

“Oh, you’d be surprised.” Phil turns his head to the painting, Tommy looking with him. “They’re twins, did you know?”

“What?!” Tommy yells, taking a step back. “They look nothing alike!”

Phil doesn’t seem to mind the way Tommy’s gone loud, and only goes to point at Techno’s face. “No, they have similar faces, look, see, their noses-”

“His hair is pink.” Tommy deadpans.

“Wilbur’s is too, actually. He only dyes it like that.” Phil shrugs, and Tommy makes a face at the picture, perplexed, because he thought it was the other way around, Techno dying *his* hair pink, rather than the both of them having naturally *pink* hair. “But, no, look at their faces, they still look similar.”

Tommy squints at the two of them, humming. “I guess so. Kinda.” He tilts his head. The different angle doesn’t help.

“I see it.” Phil protests, looking at the two of them with a face Tommy can’t put his finger on. He sounds so sure of it, and Tommy looks at them again, at the way they look so drastically different, and he guesses their faces do look almost similar, if he focuses on it. He wonders if they tried hard enough, they could switch identities.

“Come on, you should probably get cleaned up.” Phil says, bringing Tommy out of his thought process, and he goes to walk to the left, down the hall of the second floor, waiting for a second for Tommy to stand beside him again before walking. “I wanted to thank you again, for earlier, at the diner.”

“Is that why I got called up here?” Tommy asks, Phil shrugging a shoulder.

“Sorta.” He says slowly, looking ahead. “Question.”

“Hm?”

“Any guardians I should be contacting right now? You did say you didn’t have parents, which, well, I’m sorry for that, but do you have an aunt or something that I could send a message to? I bet they’d be glad to know where you are, after you’ve apparently ran around town getting into fights.”

Tommy’s mind blanks for a second, and he decides that he absolutely *cannot* tell Phil about the fact he literally lives in an orphanage. He’s already probably getting pitied from the way he looks beat up from the chaos of today, and from the way he holds Tubbo’s cookies in his hands, and he does not want pity from the literal Emperor. What does that turn him into, then? A charity case? Would Phil then make a sad face and give him money because Tommy’s a sad orphan who got dropped off at doorstep in the middle of war?

Oh, god, fuck that.

One thing Tommy knows he would absolutely hate is getting pitied, and only getting kindness out of *pity*. That would just invalidate this entire meeting, and Tommy can and will walk out of this castle, consequences be damned, if the emperor has only brought Tommy to look nice.

Part of him knows Phil's kindness is genuine, and it's not out of pity but rather compassion, and a sort of thankfulness from Tommy literally saving his life. Another part of him tells him that this might be a whole trick, and it's going to go up in flames. That might be just the general attitude from the past 24 hours talking though.

"I hope you don't get into fights this often." Phil continues, Tommy pushing his thoughts away. "Surely this is just an unusually eventful day?"

"Yeah, more or less. Way too much has happened today, and to be fair, the guys I punched deserved it." Tommy holds a fist up, Phil glancing down to the cookies held in his other hand.

"I'll take your word for it." He nods. "But also, your guardians? Is there anyone watching over you?" They pause in their steps, and Phil turns to stand in front of Tommy, eyes curious. "You're not actually on your own, are you?"

"No!" Tommy says, a little too quickly. "No, no, I'm, uh...living with my aunt."

"Oh." Phil blinks, quiet for a moment, and Tommy feels like he's said something wrong, somehow, but then his face shifts into something almost skeptical, and Tommy becomes more worried about being called out in his lie. "Well, that's comforting. But then, shouldn't you be home rather than running around town?"

"I have a curfew and shit." Tommy shrugs, then stumbles on his words. "Ah- sorry." He says, for the swearing, and he's honestly not, sorry it's just that the last thing he wants is to be *rude*.

"Curfew and shit, huh?" Phil just repeats, with a raised eyebrow and an amused face. He looks at Tommy with something in his eyes, thoughts running through his head, and Tommy nods. "Hm. I'll talk to your aunt later. Come on. We keep stalling."

Tommy ignores the slight panic in his chest and just nods, walking along.

“So, you know your lines.” Wilbur says, Techno fiddling with a ring on his finger, raising his eyes to Wilbur with a face.

“What lines?”

“Wha- *Technoblade* . We are going to get so fucking grounded-”

“That still doesn’t explain my ‘lines.’”

Wilbur huffs out a sigh, glancing down the hall to where the two of them are making their way to the dining room, to go see Phil after they’ve returned from basically running out of the castle to ditch class. He didn’t think they would be late enough to the point of coming back just in time to be slightly late for dinner, but they got distracted, and also they found a cool shop with little snacks, and Techno kept poking around, so-

They’re late, that’s the point here.

“We appeal to Phil’s sympathetic nature by saying we were looking out for him, going to check out who saved him, you know, curiosity sake.”

“That kid was vicious.” Techno snickers, Wilbur holding back a snort. “All for what, cookies?”

“Yes, yes, the kid’s not important, we literally ditched class.”

“So? I’ll just blame you for dragging me away from my studies.”

“I did not drag you away from anything, you motherfucker, half of this was your idea-”

“That’s not what I remember.” Techno grins, Wilbur punching him in the arm. “You’re the one who wanted to go see the random kid who saved Phil-”

“No, *you* were the one who was curious on a random kid who took down an assassin by chucking a plate at his head-”

“Well, *you* were the one who asked around to look for him-” Techno points out.

“You were the one who went to terrorize the teens after they got beat up by him-” Wilbur counters.

“Okay, *sure* , but you-”

“No, no, just-” Wilbur waves his hands, the two of them pausing in front of the doors that lead to the dining room. “Forget about the kid. He’s not important, what’s important, is that we’re going to be in trouble when I open this door.”

“Hm.” Techno makes a face, then pushes against the door, Wilbur pushing as well, opening it to find the familiarity of the dining room, the large table that they’ve always sat down at, plenty of food ready, Phil sitting at the end of the table, in his usual chair.

Except, on the other side of him, opposite to where Techno and Wilbur usually sit, there’s a new face, and Wilbur and Technoblade freeze in the doorway as two heads turn to him, one looking rather familiar.

“Boys.” Phil smiles, and it’s more passive-aggressive than anything, but Wilbur brushes it off in favor of him and Techno staring at Tommy, who sits at the table, poking at food in his plate, staring right back. “We have a guest.”

“Oh, I’m totally pinning the blame for this one on you.” Technoblade whispers, leaning into Wilbur.

“Shut the fuck up.” Wilbur mumbles back.

Chapter End Notes

Tommy: Oh no he's going to Pity me because I don't got a fucking parent

Phil: I swear if he doesn't actually have any sort of parent I'm taking him

kinda short chapter for today :,) but ey update!!!

I'm tired haha

Family habits

Chapter Notes

blows kiss for the people who love family dynamics

(I, too, love family dynamics, as you can see)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy might've been in shock for the first hour or so of being at the castle, which is why he didn't notice everything about the absolute ridiculousness of his situation, and was able to roll with it. It hadn't yet sunk in entirely of how he was in the literal royal castle and how he was *entirely* out of place.

Phil had walked them along through the hallways, and Tommy could only stare in fascination on how the halls were so long, how far they went. There had to be hundreds upon hundreds of doors they passed, and every few they passed had guards beside them, standing still. Even with how much Phil walked across the halls, they never went too far without seeing at least one person in light armor.

Which, he guesses makes sense, with Phil nearly getting stabbed this morning. Or is this just how security always is?

Either way, the guards provide a familiar sight, and Tommy tilts his head back to see lights hanging from the high ceilings, glances down at the nice flooring under his feet, and it still doesn't quite sink in.

Phil walks them over to a nice room, with empty beds lined up against the wall, a table to the side that has books and bottles scattered around, and a woman with puffy hair greeting them with a bright smile.

Tommy gets a new shirt that's softer than anything he's ever owned, bandages wrapped tightly his hands, and a literal *potion* , which he's only seen like three times in his life before, he doesn't have the money for this kinda stuff, and yet it still doesn't quite sink in.

It's only when he's sitting on one of the beds, sipping at a potion that tingles in his mouth and he tunes out of the conversation next to him is when it sorta partially sinks in, and he chokes on the potion.

He gets hands patting him on the back, and Phil asking him if he's alright, and Tommy has to nod and struggle to not just panic at the fact that this is actually his life right now.

If it weren't for the fact Ranboo was able to physically restrain Tubbo from leaving the bakery, he would've left and been on the streets until it got too cold to walk.

Niki had gone to ask questions at the orphanage, (and to grill them for losing a child under their care, not noticing Tommy was gone until Tubbo showed up) and she asked for Tubbo to calm down, and stay home with Ranboo while she did.

And so Tubbo stayed, crying, mostly, Ranboo frantically just trying to offer all the muffins and cakes they had on display to see if it would help, and Tubbo will admit, after a glass of milk and a cake slice, the situation was better. Not good, no way, but definitely better.

He was still moping on the counter even after the cake, legs hanging off the edge with a plate awfully close to the edge beside him as he stared at his shoes. He had stopped crying, at least, after a good half hour, and that made Ranboo stop panicking, only for him to panic again over how silent Tubbo was, head tilted down.

"I don't know what I'm supposed to do now." Tubbo blinked, Ranboo halfway through reaching for another muffin.

Ranboo just slid closed the display case very slowly, three new muffins in his hand as he walked over to Tubbo. “What do you mean?”

“I mean,” Tubbo huffs, looking up from his shoes and shaking his head. “I’ve done everything with Tommy for like my entire life! Sure, there’s been some times where we weren’t *together*, just for a bit, but it’s never been like this. Where I actually can’t get back to him.”

“Oh, Tubbo...” Ranboo trails off, putting the treats down next to Tubbo on the counter. “I’m sure he’ll be back.”

“Of course he’ll be back.” Tubbo nods, sounding too sure for any other possibility, pushing the plate beside him so it’s not so close to the edge. “But it’s still weird, you know? I’ve never been...without him, is all.”

Ranboo adjusts the mask on his face with tense shoulders, giving a careful pat onto Tubbo’s back. “It’ll be okay. I mean, I’m sure he won’t be gone for too long.”

“But where would he even *be*?” Tubbo asks, leaning forward, resting his palms onto the edge of the counter. “We’ve been to the plaza and back millions of times, he wouldn’t get lost.”

“Maybe he just took a wrong turn?” Ranboo shrugs, holding a muffin up to Tubbo.

Tubbo takes it, holding it in his hands as he still stares off, thinking. “But even then, he surely wouldn’t have gone *far*, would he? Unless he did get kidnapped.”

“Ah, well-” Ranboo waves his hands, a quiet warbling sound coming from him. “Let’s, let’s not get into the worst outcomes.”

“Well, he couldn’t have gotten murdered.” Tubbo raises his eyebrows, saying it like Tommy getting hurt is a stupid idea.

“He couldn’t have?” Ranboo ends up asking, backtracking right after. “No, no, of course not! He’s alive, he’s okay-”

“Ranboo, I have lived with Tommy my whole life.” Tubbo holds the muffin up into Ranboo’s face, Ranboo blinking at him. “I know for a fact he can not get murdered.”

Ranboo just stares at him, and he nods at Tubbo’s tone, Tubbo nodding slowly back, before taking a bite of the muffin.

“So he probably got lost.” Tubbo shrugs, looking out the window of the bakery, out into the plaza that’s now a bit more busy, with the time passing. The sign at the door tells that the bakery is closed, and it keeps from any customers entering.

“I’m sure they’ll find him. They’ll probably send people out, to you know, search-”

“Oh, but that’ll take so long!” Tubbo whines, tilting his head back, Ranboo jolting at his sudden outburst, trying to say something, having it come out garbled as Tubbo goes on. “What if they take too long? Our birthday is coming up!”

“Well, maybe they’ll find him on your birthday! That would be a nice birthday gift.” Ranboo says, holding a finger up.

“No, other people are going to take forever.” Tubbo frowns, staring at the door. “I’ll do it myself.” He declares, and then hops off the counter, leaving a half eaten muffin behind.

“Wait, what.” Ranboo asks, then goes to run around the counter to the front door, just barely getting in Tubbo’s way as he’s about to leave. “No, no! Niki said to wait-”

“Niki will understand, Ranboo, I’m going to search for Tommy.” Tubbo waves a hand, then goes to try and step around him.

“Okay, but, I think it’s safer if you just stay here, and chill, while we wait for Tommy to be found.”

“That’s going to take too long!”

“Well, you can’t just go running around to try and find him! You’ll probably get lost too!”

“Well, you can just help me. We can go look around together.” Tubbo nods, smiling.

Ranboo just stares at him nervously, a warbling coming from him as he hesitates, and for a second, Tubbo thinks he might actually be considering it, but then- “Niki said-”

“UHHHGG.” Tubbo almost stomps onto the ground, taking a few steps back. “Well, when is she going to get here?”

“Uh.” Ranboo falters, trying to remember how long Niki said she would be. Or did she even say what time she might come back? Wait, was she going to stop by anywhere on the way back? “You know what, why don’t we just have some cake-”

Tubbo sighs, crossing his arms, then goes into a sprint, trying to go for the door, sliding under Ranboo’s legs. Ranboo shrieks, nearly falling over before realizing that Tubbo is grabbing at the handle of the door, right about to run to where he’ll surely lose him, and-

He picks him up.

“Wha-!” Tubbo kicks his legs, his feet now no longer on the ground, like they should be. Ranboo just awkwardly rises him up higher, holding him away so Tubbo’s swinging legs won’t hit him. “Ranboo!”

“Tubbo!” Ranboo chimes, laughing nervously, Tubbo swinging his legs even more aggressively, as Ranboo just takes small steps away from the door.

Tubbo turns his head behind him, glaring at Ranboo, who turns his eyes to the ceiling. “Put. Me. Down.”

“No.” Ranboo responds, and then walks away from the front door. “Let’s go to the kitchen, actually-”

“No, you-!” Tubbo swipes his hand at Ranboo’s arm, kicking his leg out again, twisting around and trying to be difficult as possible.

“Listen, Niki said- okay, please stop kicking, you’re going to- OW-” Ranboo nearly drops Tubbo right onto the ground, only shifting his grip instead, trying to hold Tubbo farther away from him. “Did you just *bite* me?!”

Tubbo doesn’t answer, only holds his arms out to sweet freedom, the front door that stays out of his grasp, still struggling like an uncontrollable force of nature, and Ranboo wonders if he would even be able to find Tubbo if he got outside.

No, probably not, he’d lose the kid the second he goes out the door, and Ranboo cannot risk that. Who knows who Niki would react, she’s probably already worried about Tommy suddenly going gone. If Tubbo went missing too, it would go terribly, and Ranboo has no clue on how he would fix that, because when Niki cries, he cries, and that’s just inconvenient all around-

His yanked out of his thoughts at realizing Tubbo’s gone limp in his hands, and there’s a quiet snuffle that reaches his ears, immediately sending Ranboo into a panic.

“Wait, wait, wait, no, no-” Ranboo stammers, a warble coming from his throat as he rushes to put Tubbo down on the counter, only panicking even more when he sees the actual tears going down Tubbo’s face. “It’ll be okay! We’ll find him!”

Tubbo looks up at him, sniffing again, and Ranboo tries to convey a smile through the mask on his face.

“I know you’re worried, but you said it yourself, he’s probably fine! I bet right now, he’s trying to find a way to get back to you, or- uh, at the very least, is somewhere safe. And, and! Just think about when you finally get to see him again! Look forward to that, yeah?” Ranboo nods, raising a hand up, carefully putting it onto Tubbo’s shoulder.

Tubbo stares at him with a pout, blinking tears out of his eyes, and his head falls forward as he sobs.

“Oh, no, no-” Ranboo leans down to Tubbo’s level, digging for a napkin or cloth in the pockets of the apron tied around his waist. He finds a napkin, and carefully tries to rub at Tubbo’s face, glad to not have Tubbo push him away. “It’s alright, that’s alright. You can cry. But just know it’ll be okay.”

“Will it?” Tubbo asks, voice wavering. “I just want to see him.”

“You will! You will.” Ranboo nods, tilting Tubbo’s chin up, dabbing the napkin at his cheek. “It will be okay.”

He really hopes it will be, because he’s got no clue what he’s going to do if it isn’t. He does not have a plan B for that sorta thing.

Tubbo huffs, biting the inside of his cheek. He knows Tommy is alright. Has to be, really, if he wasn’t, Tubbo can and will learn necromancy for the sole purpose of raising Tommy from the dead, killing him again, and then bringing back a second time for a hug.

But it doesn’t change the fact that Tubbo still feels awfully out of place, suddenly not having him here, and he’s confused as to what he even does now. He wants to go search for Tommy, wants to run across the streets until night falls and his throat is sore from yelling, but at the same time he knows that Tommy will end up back at his side without him doing anything.

But it's still annoying.

"He better be back in time for our birthday." Tubbo mumbles, Ranboo laughing. "I swear, if he isn't."

"Ah, I'm sure he'll get back before then." Ranboo huffs, holding the napkin out to Tubbo, who takes it from him, rubbing at his own face to properly dry it. "It'll be alright. In the meantime, hey, we can start thinking about a birthday cake? You could surprise him when he gets back!"

"Surprise him by smashing it into his face, maybe." Tubbo shrugs, Ranboo choking on a laugh.

"*Oh- Pfft-*"

Tubbo laughs with him, shaking his head, staring down at his shoes again, and he looks up to Ranboo, who adjusts his mask over his nose, blinking back down at Tubbo, before flicking his eyes to the side.

"What's under your mask?" Tubbo asks, holding the damp napkin tightly in his palms, narrowing his eyes.

"Huh-" Ranboo falters, than waves a hand. "Eh, my face."

"Can I see?" Tubbo asks, raising his eyebrows, Ranboo humming, unsure.

"Oh, I don't know about that one-"

"But Ranboo."

“I mean, you just stopped crying, maybe we can-”

“But *Ranboo* .”

“Bake a cake or something, I know there’s this one recipe that I’m good at-”

“Why won’t you let me see your face?” Tubbo asks, frowning. “You’re very nice to me, letting me eat things on display, trying to comfort me awkwardly, giving me this napkin-”

“I mean, that’s just basic kindness, Tubbo.” Ranboo mutters.

“But you won’t show me your actual face?” Tubbo finishes, frowning even more intensely. “Do you not trust me?”

“I trust you!” Ranboo stammers, a warble coming from him. “I do, really! You’re a good friend, or family, I guess-” He mumbles for a moment. “And I’m sure I’ll trust you even more with time, but it’s not that.”

“Are you just so handsome that you’ll blind me if I see you.” Tubbo deadpans, Ranboo choking on a snort.

“Pfft- Oh, yeah, yeah, that’s totally it.” He nods, grabbing the half eaten muffin from beside Tubbo, holding it out to him. “It’s just, I don’t want to freak you out so early.”

“What, because you’re a hybrid person or something like that?” Tubbo asks, taking the muffin, just holding it. “Ranboo, I really don’t care. We’re friends.” He hesitates. “Family.”

There’s a moment of silence between them, and then they both lower their heads, mumbling.

“Yeah, I’m not used to that-”

“Oh, that’s too much for me-”

“I’m gonna cry again-” Tubbo hits his palm to his face, Ranboo snapping his head up.

“Ah, no, nope!” He holds his hands out, Tubbo sniffing. “It’s alright! I, uh-”

Tubbo gets an idea. “If you don’t show me what’s under your mask, I’ll cry.”

“You’ll WHAT-”

He sniffles again, letting tears sit at the edge of his eyes, glaring tearfully at Ranboo as he goes into a panic.

“No, no, no, wait, that’s not fair- Hey, no, don’t cry- Wait, that’s sad- Stop it!”

He tries to look even more near tears.

“Okay, okay, fine!” Ranboo says, grabbing the napkin from Tubbo’s hands, slapping it into his face. “I *can* show you, I just-” He stops.

Tubbo wipes at his eyes, waiting. “What?”

Ranboo takes a deep breath in, holding his hands together in front of him. “I just-”

“Just, what?”

Tubbo hears a warbling sound, before he speaks again. “I just...don’t want to scare you.” He finishes lamely.

Tubbo blinks at him, making an unimpressed face. “Really.”

“It’s a valid concern! I’ve had little kids cry at me before!”

“Well, I’m not going to cry!” Tubbo insists, crossing his arms. “Again.” He tacks on.

Ranboo still doesn’t look entirely convinced. “I still think we should bake a cake.”

“Ranboooo.”

“Agh, fine.” Ranboo huffs, reaching up to his mask, pulling the strap off from behind his ears, and after a moment, Tubbo can only blink and stare, because,

It honestly looks so cool.

Ranboo’s mouth crosses his face, slightly jagged lines up his cheeks in a way that suggest that he can literally unhinge his jaw, and Tubbo can only say-

“You really are like an enderman!”

Ranboo sighs, either in relief or amusement, and he nods. “Uh, yeah! Sometimes. My mouth kinda...freaks people out sometimes, so I just wear a mask to cover it whenever I’m out so I don’t spook anyone.”

“Aw, but that’s not fair to you, man.” Tubbo frowns. “Doesn’t it get annoying?”

“Not really.” Ranboo shrugs. “I mean, kinda, but it’s better than getting weird looks.”

“Here, I’ll make a deal.” Tubbo declares, holding out a hand, Ranboo taking it without thinking, then making wide eyes as he slightly regrets his decision in the way Tubbo holds on tightly. “You don’t wear your mask for all of today, and I won’t try and run out to go find Tommy on my own. We don’t even have to go anywhere! Just put the mask away for today, and we can make a cake.”

“Hmm.” Ranboo turns it over in his head, already shaking Tubbo’s hand even though he’s still considering. “You really don’t think I look weird.”

“I think it’s cool.” Tubbo shrugs, and Ranboo blinks at him, a warble coming from his throat before he takes his hand away.

“Okay.” He chokes out. He clears his throat. “Yeah, yeah! Let’s make a cake!”

“Yeah!”

They end up setting the oven on fire. Luckily, Niki gets there in time.

After Tommy gets checked over, feels the effect of the potion wash over him, healing and warm, he’s left with a internal screaming of ‘oh my god I’m IN the castle, and the emperor is just talking to me like we’re good ol pals-’

The potion is cool, though, Tommy's never really had one before, he's only seen them being used for other kids in certain situations. Tommy's never been hurt too bad or gotten sick enough to actually need a potion, although he remembers a certain instance when Tubbo had needed one.

He had simply gotten too high of a fever, just high enough to become worrying, and Tommy had sat by the bed while Tubbo drank from a tiny red glass bottle, coughing with a sore throat every minute. He had doubted it would work then, even with all him and Tubbo have read about potions and brewing, but sure enough, less than an hour later, Tubbo's temperature dropped significantly, and he was well enough for the caretakers to stop fussing over him and let Tommy be the main worrier instead.

Tubbo had said it tasted like strawberries, although with Tommy drinking a potion himself, he will say that it's more of a raspberry, really.

The cut on his lip had faded away into a small mark, that's apparently left to heal all the way on it's own, and his hands no longer sting and ache like they did when he came in. The slight bruises and pains he had gotten from the absolute mess of last night and this morning has gone away, and he feels...pretty okay, actually. Now that he doesn't have any fatigue or pain to worry about, the awe and panic hits him like a train, which turns to him simply agreeing and nodding his head when Phil suggests dinner.

Well, he won't pass down free food, unless it's out of pity, because then that just makes him feel like shit. He doesn't have much time to dwell on it, though, as Phil leads him through the castle again, Tommy sticking to his side in fear of getting lost, because geez, there are too many turns for him to even *think* about remembering. Although, Phil lives here, so he guesses that Phil is used to it.

Tommy goes with Phil to a large room with a big, long table, plenty of chairs beside it and a rather ridiculous amount of food on it.

Now Tommy will wholeheartedly say that the food at the orphanage? Not the best. It's good, some days, homey, but sometimes the breakfast tastes incredibly plain, and Tommy would rather run with Tubbo to the plaza to get something better.

Although, in comparison to *this* , plates and plates of food laid out on the table, all of it looking better than any meal Tommy's ever eaten before, it's just ridiculous.

" *This* is dinner?" Tommy asks, sitting down to the left of Phil, who sits at the very end of the table, folding his wings tightly closed behind him. "This is a shit-ton of food!" Tommy swears, and he would worry about being rude, with swearing, but Phil had straight up just repeated him when he did so earlier, so he will speak how he wants until Phil says something.

"Well, it's not *just* for us. Usually when we're done, it's all up for grabs for any guards who pass by on their break." Phil smiles, shurgging. "But I like to eat with my sons first, family dinner, you know?"

Tommy stares at the empty plate in front of him, silverware beside it, and the words process slowly in his head. "Uh, should I even be here, then?"

"You're a guest." Phil waves a hand, serving himself as he speaks. Tommy goes to follow. "You can eat with us."

Tommy huffs, grinning nervously. "Sure, Phil."

A few minutes later, they eat quietly in peace, Tommy chewing on a piece of steak (which tastes fucking amazing-) as he stares at all the other empty chairs beside him, across from him.

"Where's Wilbur?" Tommy asks, Phil raising his head. "And...Technoblade." He continues, nearly forgetting the name.

"Hm." Phil smiles, but it doesn't quite reach his eyes, and he glances to the door. "They are a bit late. They were supposed to be finishing up class a while ago."

“Weird.” Tommy mutters, looking up to the lights hanging from the ceiling, blinking at how fancy it seems. He feels so out of place and yet welcomed at the same time. It’s jarring.

They lapse into silence for another minute or two, and the front doors suddenly swing open, Phil raising his head with a hardly surprised look, Tommy turning his head with wide eyes.

“Boys.” Phil smiles, Tommy flicking his eyes from Phil to Wilbur and Technoblade, back and forth, before taking another bite of his food, because, it really is good- “We have a guest.”

Tommy feels nerves as Phil says that, feeling out of his league again, but he quickly pushes it to the side in favor of being confident, and also because he’s more focused on how Wilbur and Technoblade stare at him as if he’s popped out of a portal from the future or something.

Technoblade whispers something that Tommy doesn’t hear, and he nearly chokes at hearing Wilbur respond ‘shut the fuck up.’

“So you’re late.” Phil goes on, his fork clinking against his plate, the doors closing behind the twins as they falter at the other side of the dinner table.

“Phil.” Wilbur says, clasping his hands together, looking nervous.

“We can explain.” Techno starts.

“Explain what?” Phil asks, glancing at Tommy, giving a smile, and Tommy holds back a laugh, feeling like he’s watching a scolding. It’s funny.

Techno pauses, then starts again. “Wilbur can explain-”

“-oh, shut up-” Wilbur hisses.

“Tommy, these are my sons, like we talked about earlier. Wilbur, Technoblade.” Phil raises a hand up to both of them, Tommy raising his chin. “Boys, this is Tommy.”

“Nice to meet you.” Wilbur grits out, Techno nodding with narrowed eyes towards Phil, who smiles back without faltering.

“Hello.” Tommy says, wondering if he should call them ‘your highnesses’, with them being princes and all. “You’re late to dinner.” He says instead, shoving a piece of steak into his mouth.

Technoblade blinks at him. Wilbur makes a face like he can’t tell if he wants to be slightly offended or laugh.

“Are you both just going to stand there?” Phil asks, huffing at the way they seem almost skittish, with Tommy at the dinner table.

“Rude to stare.” Tommy says through a mouthful of food, and Technoblade and Wilbur share glances, before going to sit down.

They sit across from Tommy, by Phil, side by side. They serve themselves like they’ve done it a hundred times over, and Tommy pokes his food, feeling slightly annoyed at the way they keep sharing glances, looking at Tommy like he’s fell out of the sky, and glancing to Phil like he’s pulling their leg.

“So.” Tommy starts, leaning forward with his elbows on the table. “Why were you guys late?”

“Wilbur made us skip class.” Technoblade responds without hesitation, and Wilbur kicks him under the table, Phil snickering.

“We were busy.” Wilbur tries to remedy, but Tommy just makes a face that could almost be judgemental.

“Yes, I’m sure.” Phil grins, Wilbur and Techno both looking in different directions, away from Phil, who just laughs quietly again. “So busy you didn’t realize there was someone new in the castle?”

“Okay, well, listen, we were off doing stuff, we didn’t expect for you to bring a...” Technoblade trails off. “Child...to the dinner table.”

“I am not a fucking child.” Tommy deadpans, raising his eyes to Wilbur, who just looks back with a thoughtful expression, chewing on his food.

Then, “Infant.” He says, and Tommy knows full-on that was a jab, with how he grins.

Tommy leans back in his seat, anger simmering in him, and he reaches over to a plate of carrots, throwing one over and letting it land onto Wilbur’s plate, nearly missing.

“Get some vitamins, *your highness*, I think your eyes are shit.” He drawls, Wilbur smiling, tilting his head, and Techno looks at Wilbur with a slight shake of his head. Phil just eats his food in peace.

Wilbur grabs a spoonful of what looks to be mashed potatoes, and flings it at Tommy, having it land just next to his hand, Tommy jerking his arm away from the table.

He throws another carrot, hitting Wilbur in the arm.

Wilbur sends food right onto his shirt.

Tommy stands up suddenly from his seat, the chair screeching back, Wilbur leaning forward as if he’s ready for something interesting. Techno just picks up his plate with a slightly worried yet intrigued look, as if he’s saying ‘No. Wait. Definitely don’t do that.’

Phil looks up at Tommy, who narrows his eyes at Wilbur, then looks to Phil with a burning spite in his eyes. "Phil, can I fucking throw something." He asks.

Phil holds back a laugh, Techno shrugging to himself and moving to go eat underneath the table.

"Can I. Throw something." Tommy asks again, simply for the sake of respect, and Wilbur looks so amused, grinning wide.

"Do it, go, bet you fucking-" Wilbur whispers, Tommy being seven seconds from flipping him off.

"Sure, mate." Phil agrees, and Tommy sends his plate flying into Wilbur's face.

"Oh, weak throw, weak throw-!" Wilbur yells, ducking as a plate goes flying over him, shattering in the back.

"Careful with those." Phil says offhandedly, Techno passing him potatoes underneath the table as Tommy flings another plate.

"Fuck *you*- "

"Fuck you!"

"Do we have mushrooms, or did Wilbur already use that for ammo?" Techno asks, Phil humming.

“Already used it.” Phil responds, looking at Tommy from under the table, noting the mushroom slices stuck to his shirt.

About half an hour later, a good portion of the food is scattered across the floor, Technoblade is sitting criss-cross beside Wilbur, who’s face down into the ground, and Tommy is chewing on what looks to be a carrot from underneath the table.

“Have you both made a truce?” Phil asks, stepping over an overturned plate.

Wilbur just groans into the ground. Technoblade pokes him in the back of the head.

“You know, I think I won.” Tommy nods, looking at Phil, and Phil laughs.

Chapter End Notes

Phil, watching a food fight go on right in front of him: This is a good way to let them bond :)

Tommy can and will throw down. Wilbur likes to spur on funny situations. Good mix, those two, in this fic.

This was fun to write! Man, that Ranboo-Tubbo scene got so much more longer than I thought it would be haha

hope it was fun to read? Thanks for reading :D

Bad impulse decisions

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“It was more of a tie, really.” Technoblade mutters, leaning an elbow onto his leg, his face resting against his palm. Tommy narrows his eyes at him from under the table, but Techno hardly notices, instead picking a piece of food out of Wilbur hair.

He makes an annoyed face at his hand getting dirty, then goes to wipe it onto Wilbur’s shirt, ignoring the way Wilbur tries to swipe at him, rolling away.

Wilbur sits up from the floor, huffing as he tries to wipe the back of his hands against his pants, fully noticing the way stains are set into his clothes.

“I think I’ve got fucking spaghetti down the back of my shirt.” He mumbles, running a hand through his hair and making a face at the bits of food in it, sticking to the strands. Techno snorts at his expression.

“Oh, gross. Don’t touch me.” Techno quips, and Wilbur immediately snaps his head up too quick, a gleam in his eye. Techno scoots away from him.

Although Wilbur doesn’t do much, he just holds a palm out and leans dangerously close, and Techno nearly falls back from how he tries to get away. “Don’t *touch*- I swear, if you get that on my shirt-”

Wilbur laughs.

Phil watches the two of them bickering on the ground and he smiles with a warm fondness in his chest. Oh, he’s still pissed over them just skipping class. But still, small moments.

He shakes his head, turning his head over to Tommy, who had been staring at Phil, and turns his head away with a jolt when Phil gives his attention to him.

Walking over to the table, he kneels down in front of where Tommy's sitting under it, Tommy tucking his legs with him in fear that he'll somehow trip Phil.

Phil looks under the table to find Tommy with wide eyes, *almost* guilty, but more challenging than anything, a small furrow in his eyebrows where as if he's expecting for Phil to call him out.

Phil huffs with a smile, holding a hand against the table to keep his balance.

"Not exactly how I expected dinner to go..." He trails off, tilting his head to the mess around them. Tommy just puts the carrot in his hands to the side, shrugging.

"I said I could beat them in a fight."

"A food fight."

"Same thing."

Phil snickers, Tommy giving a hesitant laugh along. "You did say that." Tommy nods, confident. "Why don't you get cleaned up, and we can go talk?"

Tommy blinks, his confidence seeming to drain from his expression and his shoulders as he processes Phil's words.

"Talk?" Tommy repeats.

“About your aunt, home. I know you said you have a curfew, but she must be worried sick by now, if you haven’t been home since morning. I know I would be.” There’s a bitter taste when Phil has to ask about his aunt, and there’s a small part of him that wonders if he could possibly bargain for custody, even with the strange rumors that would definitely swirl around.

A small, selfish part of him hopes that Tommy was nervous because he lied, and he doesn’t have an aunt at all. Phil tells himself to be mature.

He can battle for custody later.

Tommy struggles to keep his face neutral as he tries to scrape together a plan for his non-existent aunt, and for his non-existent home. Well, he does have a home, but he’s not sure how he can admit that ‘home’ is a giant building with a bunch of other orphans.

Phil doesn’t seem to notice his panic, and instead turns his head over to Wilbur and Techno, who freeze at realizing Phil’s gaze has been turned onto them.

“As for you two.” Phil deadpans, Wilbur looking at the floor under him like it’s the most interesting thing in the world.

“Ah-” Technoblade holds a finger up, about to scrape together a defence, even if he’s not as good at that as Wilbur is.

“You’re both grounded.” Phil says, cutting him off before he starts.

“Dangit.” Techno mumbles, Wilbur frowning intensely.

“But-” Wilbur starts, mouth opening, only to click shut at Phil’s narrowed eyes, mouth pressed into a thin line.

“Nope.” Phil simply says, and he rises to his feet, Wilbur huffing. “Wilbur, go clean up. Techno.”

“I’ll go start on classes.” Techno waves a hand, getting up from the ground as Wilbur makes a dramatic groan of pain. “Wilbur, stop dying.”

“No.” Wilbur responds, making a sour face. Techno kicks him in the side.

Tommy panics internally the entire time him and Phil walk down the halls.

He apologizes awkwardly for ruining the new shirt that he had just gotten not that long ago, and Phil reassures him with a wave of his hand and saying something about how they have plenty.

Right, royalty. Rich as hell. Probably have a fuckton of shirts.

The shirt isn’t really his main problem, his main problem is the fact he does not have an *aunt*. He doesn’t have any sort of family, really, unless you count Tubbo, but Tommy doesn’t really think he could pass Tubbo off as his aunt. He’s too short, and...Tubbo-ish.

Niki could work, maybe, but that would be an awkward conversation, ‘hey so, I lied to the emperor, yeah don’t panic, pretend to be family and I’ll pay you’.

That’s if Tommy even gets to Niki before Phil. No doubt they’ll open the door asking for Tommy’s aunt, and Niki will just straight up say ‘I’m not his aunt?’ and blow up his entire fragile plan to not get pitied.

Maybe he can just come clean. Even with the pity that’s bound to come, maybe if Tommy delivers it correctly, he won’t become a charity case, and he won’t have to make the

Emperor's mood go down.

Although, as he looks at Phil, who gives a bright smile back, he does not have enough courage to admit that he's lied to the Emperor, so he instead just continues to panic, even as he's pushed into a room with a clean set of clothes.

There's a fancy couch and table in the middle of the room, with bookcases to the side, shelves on the walls. A window across the door shows the white snow outside, falling lightly from the sky.

"I'll be outside, okay? Just call when you're changed." Phil says, closing the door quietly behind him, and Tommy's left in a room with nothing but a set of new clothes, many regrets, and a half baked plan forming in his head.

He tugs the shirt over his head as his mind races, and his thought process jumps from trying to make a good defence, to maybe using Niki again, to Tubbo, to 'oh god wait how long have I been away-' to panicking again, but this time with a little more Flavor.

He's stupidly late for meeting up with Tubbo. His reason for why is ridiculous, and he doubts Tubbo will even believe him, because to be honest, he doesn't entirely believe it himself.

But Phil wants to talk about his non-existent aunt, and Tommy doesn't have a plan, and he really needs to get back to town with Tubbo or else he is going to *die* .

From missing Tubbo or from getting murdered by him, who knows, but Tommy raises his head to the window across the room, vaguely considering pros and cons.

But he wouldn't go out the window, surely. It's freezing, the temperature is colder up at the castle, he probably doesn't even have a way to get back to town without getting seen, and it's just a terrible plan all around- oh wait, he went out the window.

Really, the entire day is made up of his impulse decisions, aren't they?

A few minutes later, Phil comes knocking at the door, asking if Tommy's ready. When he doesn't get an answer, he knocks again. Then he goes in with a warning that he's coming in, and he takes one step into the room, sees the wide open window with the cold wind blowing through, some snow having fallen in, and he turns right back around, yelling for guards and sending the whole castle into a lockdown.

Technoblade looks through the bookshelves of their library, skimming over the titles and trying to figure out where he had left off. The library isn't too big, so it shouldn't be hard to find the book he's looking for.

If he was in the actual royal library, he would be searching for hours, would be walking for hours. But here, it's a smaller place specifically for him and Wilbur to study, still plenty of bookshelves, two tables to the side for them to use, but not as overwhelming.

He picks out a book, opening it up and skimming over the words in a random page, making a face. He'd much rather go figure out what's the deal with the new kid in the castle, rather than study, but he would do anything to avoid Phil's disappointed stare.

The front doors opens with a quiet creak, and Techno doesn't look up, expecting it to be Wilbur. Instead, he hears the voice of a guard.

"Your highness?"

Technoblade looks down the aisle of books, seeing one of the familiar hall guards stand at the end, giving a friendly smile. They don't look panicked, so Techno doesn't assume the worst.

"The castle has gone on lockdown." They inform, and Technoblade blinks. "Do you want to go to your room, or are you alright staying here?"

“Is Wilbur stuck in his room?” Techno asks, instead of answering, and they nod. “Heh.” He’s probably annoyed, having gone to go wash out the food in his hair, then having to be stuck in his room with guards in front of his door.

“Should we move you over there?” They ask, pointing a finger over to the door, and Techno shakes his head, looking back down to the book in his hands.

“Nah, I’ll stay here. Why’s the castle on lockdown?” He flips a page. Maybe he can get even more ahead of Wilbur for the time being.

“The emperor’s guest has seemed to have escaped out of a window, and now we’re not sure where he’s gone.”

Techno raises his eyebrows at hearing that, really wishing he could go see what that is about, go ask Phil, but he’s stuck in this room for now, so he instead just nods. “Alright. You can go.”

Footsteps sound out, and the doors close, Techno knowing there’s two people standing guard in front of it.

Grabbing a few more books off the shelf, Techno goes to sit down at the table, putting the pile of books down, opening one up. He might as well pass time, pass Wilbur in their studies, for the heck of it.

There’s a small click, a familiar one that Techno knows, because that’s the click of the latch of the nearby window that him and Wilbur use to run out on lessons every single time. He raises his head, closing the book in front of him and picking it up, quietly getting up from his seat.

Moving silently through the bookshelves, he makes his way over to the window, and he’s not surprised to see Tommy quite literally tumble in, covered in snow, and shivering like hell.

Chapter End Notes

Short chap for today, it's 1 am and it's my birthday!!! So you know, hope you liked reading.

Thanks for reading :D

Could be a home, maybe

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Technoblade just blinks, at first, holding the book up in the air as he silently watches Tommy tumble in from outside.

He's covered in snow and shivering from head to toe, mumbling swears under his breath as he pushes himself to his feet and pushes the window closed, breathing heavily.

Techno blinks again. Tommy stills, staring at the window. He slowly turns his head to Techno, and Technoblade can see the bits of snow still stuck in his hair, flakes of white melting in the warmth of the room. They stare at each other for a moment, and Techno internally wishes Wilbur was here instead of stuck in his room right now.

"You." Tommy says, pointing a finger right at Technoblade, narrowing his eyes. Techno blinks for a third time, squeezing the book in his hands.

He chucks the book at Tommy.

Tommy ducks, just barely dodging getting hit in the face, the book sailing over his head and hitting the floor with a thump. Tommy glances behind him at the book on the ground, then turns to Techno with an incredulous look, wrapping his arms around himself to try and warm up. "What the fuck?! What was that for?"

Techno frowns, crossing his arms. "You're the reason the whole castle is on lockdown." He says simply, and Tommy doesn't quite process the sentence at first, eyes wandering to the books around them, then the words sink in, and his eyes go wide.

"The castle is *what*?"

Techno really wishes Wilbur was here right now. He's got a vague idea of who this kid is, sure, and he'll admit that he's definitely got fight in him, which he'll respect, but he does not want to start a conversation with the person who apparently thought climbing out the window and sending the whole castle into a lockdown was a good idea.

Even if he is Phil's guest.

Tommy's eyes are full of slight panic, like he didn't consider the fact that his escape would have such an impact, and Techno is torn between laughing or yelling for the guards.

There's quiet whispers in his head noting how cold Tommy looks, how he's curled in on himself, and Techno ignores it, even though they do have a point on how Tommy looks slightly pathetic.

Techno shrugs, then turns around, walking down the aisle of books next to him. "You went missing, Phil called a lockdown-"

"He fucking-" Tommy huffs out a laugh, hitting a hand to his forehead. "Holy shit- Wait, wait, where are you going-" Tommy stumbles, running after Techno.

"To the hallway." Techno answers, walking faster. He doesn't get to take another step as hands grab at his arm, stopping in his tracks. He turns to Tommy, who shakes his head vigorously.

"No, no, no-" Tommy pulls again, and Techno actually stumbles back a step, not expecting to get yanked again. "Aren't there going to be guards outside?"

"There's guards in front of the door." Techno slowly nods. "And I'm pretty sure I should go-"

"Nope, no, no-" Tommy heaves, leaning back with all his weight to pull Techno his direction, and Techno just leans forwards slightly in his efforts. "-we're not doing that-"

“*We’re* not doing anything-” Techno says, trying to get his arm back, but Tommy’s latched onto it with a death grip, and the teen stumbles with Techno trying to pull away. “*I’m* going to go inform the guards that you’re not out running around outside-”

“Nooo, you’re not-” Tommy stresses, Techno spinning around and making Tommy lose his grip, falling to the floor. He hops back onto his feet within seconds, and before Techno can even take a step forward, he’s trying to push Technoblade back now. “-bitch, get back, go that way, that way.”

“Are you seriously trying to push me-”

“You can’t go to the hallway, hallway is off-limits-”

“Stop *pushing* me-”

“Other way, that way-”

“I’m not going that way!”

“Well now you are!” Tommy insists, his feet skidding for a second as he tries to push Techno the other direction. After a second, he gives up on getting Techno to move, and instead just stands in the way, arms stretched out to the bookshelves on either side of him.

Tommy points a finger over Techno’s shoulder, trying to block as much of his path as possible. “That way or else.” He says, and it’s not very intimidating when he’s still slightly shivering from the cold, teeth chattering.

Techno leans back on his heels for a moment, looking at Tommy with an almost judgemental look. “Or else what?” He asks, choosing to humor him.

“I’ve got a weapon.” Tommy raises his chin, shoulders set.

Technoblade just blinks. “*Really.*” He says slowly, purposely dragging out the word.

“What is that *tone*- are you making fun of me-”

“*No*, of *course* not-” Techno waves a hand. He debates just walking right through Tommy to the hallway anyway, but he’s not sure if he wants to deal with the possibility of Tommy clinging onto his leg to try and stop him.

“Yes you are, motherfucker-” Tommy narrows his eyes, making a face.

“Look,” Techno raises his palms up to Tommy. “I just seriously doubt you have an actual weapon and I also seriously doubt you can even use it.” Also, using a weapon against him would hardly end well. One, because Technoblade could easily win a fight, and two, he’s the literal prince. No one can attack him without probably getting arrested for it right after Techno is done with them.

Tommy sniffs, turning his head to the side in slight offense. “My weapon is my words, bitch.”

“That sounds like something Wilbur would say.” Techno mutters. Wilbur probably has said that before. His words are weapons, quiet and deadly, something something, meaning and waxing poems, Techno doesn’t really remember.

“I don’t feel very threatened.” Techno says, Tommy going into a stance, like he’s bracing for Techno to just kick him out of the way.

“Well, you should.”

“Hm.” Techno presses his lips together tightly, huffing through his nose. Part of him wants to go get the guards still, and if he really wanted to, he could just yell and they would come a second later.

But then again. He kinda wants to know more about Phil’s guest.

Ugh, Wilbur’s better at questions than he is.

“Alright, I’ll make a deal.” Techno offers, Tommy staring at him before nodding.

“Okay, deal, what’s the deal?”

“I won’t call for the guards, or go out into the hallway, but you got to give me answers on what I ask.” Techno says, eyes glancing past Tommy, internally wondering if this is a smart choice. Phil’s probably stressed, trying to look for a kid who went out the literal *window* .

But he really wants to know more.

“You want to interrogate me.” Tommy frowns, Techno humming.

“Sure.” Techno doesn’t bother denying it. Yeah, that’s more or less what he’ll settle for.

Tommy’s frown deepens, and he tilts his head like he’s trying to hear something. But he’s considering it in his head, along with his choices here, which, honestly, aren’t that many. He could go back out the window, but it was fucking *freezing* , and he really doesn’t want to go back out there.

But he also really would rather not get caught, nor get asked a bunch of questions from the prince- and ohhh wait, Tommy just remembered, he’s standing in front of a prince. Is he going to get arrested for threatening him?

Techno's still waiting on an answer for their deal, and without thinking, Tommy holds out his hand, pinky out-stretched. "Alright, fine, but you have to pinky-promise."

Techno blinks, his face shifting into slight shock and exasperation.

Holding back hesitation, Tommy curses his habits he's picked up from Tubbo. Pinky-promises are just a thing they do, and he probably shouldn't be using it with the literal prince, but it's too late to back out now, so he just holds his hand out insistently, face determined.

He then remembers the fact he needs to get back to Tubbo, and he then promptly shoves down the slight panic (lots of panic) he gets from that thought.

Techno sees Tommy's face go from unhappy to something of dread, and he sighs heavily, begrudgingly locking pinkies for just a second. "Yeah, fine."

He and Wilbur have done that sometimes, when they were younger. Sometimes they still do.

Tommy looks surprised at Techno's willingness, but he quickly gets over it, nodding and crossing his arms. "Alright, ask away."

"Who are you?" Techno asks.

"Someone very cool, thank you very much--"

"Name." Techno specifies.

Tommy sighs. "Tommy." He says, with as little enthusiasm as he can muster, sounding dead.

Techno gives him a face. “That’s it? No last name? Thomas, something?”

“It’s not Thomas-” Tommy scrunches his nose, like he’s thinking over something, before pushing it aside, shaking his head. “Tommy. Just Tommy.”

“What’s your last name?”

Tommy just shrugs. “I dunno. What’s *your* name?”

“Technoblade Watson.” Techno answers without a hint of hesitation. He’s a bit suspicious of Tommy not having a last name, but then again, maybe he’s without family. “Why are you here?”

“Saved Phil from some guy trying to stab him.”

“I knew that.”

“Then why’d you *ask*-”

“There’s got to be another reason why you’re here.”

Tommy rolls his eyes. “That’s what Phil said I’m here for. Because I was ‘brave’ or something.” He sighs. “It’s been a fucking eventful day.” He mutters, more quietly.

Techno hums, turning Tommy’s words over in his head. Phil’s had assassination attempts on him before, that’s true. And there’ve been a handful of people who’ve saved him, brave people. But Phil didn’t invite those people to *family dinner*.

Techno's pretty sure he already knows what's going on, he wants to run it through Wilbur first, but right now, Tommy's looking at the floor with an almost unhappy look. Techno's head grows louder, not in a bad way, but he's not sure if he should be concerned or not about what his chat is yelling.

He holds back a sigh. "Fine. Tell me about it."

"What."

"From the beginning. Tell me about your day."

Phil feels the cold air bite at his skin as he flies up through the air, scanning the snow around the castle. The wind today is unforgiving, freezing and sharp, and Phil frowns when he doesn't see anything except his guards searching the area.

Tommy can't have gone too far. The front gates were shut the moment Phil called for a lockdown, and all the guards are on alert. The castle is secure, and it's really just a matter of someone spotting the kid in the snow.

Phil sees nothing as he flies over a third time, and he sighs, circling around and landing onto the ground, guards running up to meet him as soon as his boots hit the snow.

"Find anything?" He asks, pushing hair out of his face.

"Nothing, your Grace." He gets for an answer, and he resists the urge to sigh again. "With the snow starting up again, we don't see any footprints..."

Phil hums, looking up to the snow that falls from the sky, cold and familiar. Why would Tommy just leave? He can't have disappeared just like that, unless he had another way of

getting out, but Phil was sure Tommy didn't have any abilities of any sort.

Or did he? Phil can't be sure. He wants to ask, but Tommy needs to be found first. It could be a possibility that Tommy went back into the castle, and is hiding somewhere there, but Phil's already sent guards to go search inside.

This *has* been a long day for the kid. Now that Phil thinks about it, maybe this was all too much, and he just panicked and ran. Out the window, for some reason, but he ran either way.

And as much as Phil wants to try sitting down with Tommy in front of a fireplace, with warm drinks, maybe, so he could talk and get to know him better, Tommy might just be overwhelmed. It makes sense. Sometimes, Phil forgets that he's regarded with such respect, and he forgets that making simple conversation with the townspeople can be nerve wracking to them.

They'll always see him as the emperor, although after a few conversations, they'll eventually just know him as Phil. And that's all Phil wants for Tommy as well.

He ignores the slight tug in his heart, a quiet selfish part of him insistent on giving Tommy a place to sleep, just for tonight. He could press for details on why Tommy was able to get into so much trouble. He could make it so it never happens again, he could give Tommy a better place to stay.

But he chooses not to, and instead he tells himself that the second Tommy is found, he can be sent back home, away from the castle. There's probably family who are worried for him, waiting for him to get back.

As much as Tommy is endearing and awfully chaotic like his other two boys, he's not family.

And Phil's not his family.

Maybe he can visit Tommy a few days from now. Then, Phil can try getting to know him better, and at the very least, he can keep an eye on him.

Satisfied with that decision, he nods to his guards. “Keep looking. It’s too cold for him to stay out here.”

They continue to search, and Phil stretches out his wings, flying up into the air once more.

“Your highness!”

Wilbur nearly trips on the next turn, laughing under his breath as he continues to run, hearing the sound of multiple people following.

“Your highness, wait-!” He heard someone call again, and he just grins, running down the hall to where two other guards are standing in front of the library, turning their heads to Wilbur with a surprised look, but also something resigned.

He slows down, panting for a second as his shoes skid across the floor for a second as he comes to a stop. “Is, is Techno in there?” He asks, pointing a finger to the door, the other guards still trying to catch up to him down the hall.

Wilbur feels slightly sorry for making them run after him, after he dashed out of his room without a single warning. Now that he thinks about it, he probably could’ve asked to be escorted over to Techno, rather than just making an impulse decision and running for it.

Eh, too late now.

One of the guards nod to Wilbur’s question, stepping to the side as Wilbur reaches for the handle, pulling the door open and heading inside, but not before giving an apologetic smile to

the guards who had been placed at his room door, now just watching him go in with a resigned exasperation.

“Thank you!” He chimes, and he closes the door behind him, sighing.

He leans his back into the door for a moment, looking into the library to see Technoblade, who’s leaning against the bookshelves with an overly suspicious smile.

“Heyyy.” Techno greets, Wilbur blinking, raising his eyebrows at how awkwardly Techno is placed. Thankfully, the weird attempt at making a casual smile goes away, dropping into confusion as Techno asks “Wait, weren’t you supposed to be in your room?”

“I got bored and sprinted down the halls.” Wilbur shrugs, pushing himself off the door and walking over to Technoblade. “They’re taking forever to find that kid.”

“Oh, yeah.” Techno looks to the floor, rather than at Wilbur, crossing his arms. “Phil’s still searching around outside.”

“It’s been like twenty minutes already since he jumped out the window, where would he even *go* ?” Wilbur asks, and Techno raises his head to look at him, and Wilbur notices something shift from behind Techno.

“He’s still running around, probably. Maybe passed out in the snow.” Techno shrugs, nonchalant. “Got buried in it, maybe.”

“Hm.” Wilbur stops in front of Techno, mirroring him in the way that he crosses his arms. “Technoblade.”

“Yeah?”

“Who’s behind you?”

Techno pauses, not answering for a moment, and instead looking at the floor with wide eyes, scratching at the side of his chin. “Uh-”

“Technoblade-”

“I cannot confirm...nor deny-”

“You’re fucking kidding me-”

“-that there is a person behind me-”

Wilbur drops his face into his hands, smothering his laugh.

“Who may or may not be the exact person that caused the lockdown in the first place-” Techno jolts, getting kicked in the back of the leg. “Do not *kick* me-”

“Okay, okay, move.” Wilbur waves a hand, pushing Techno to the side, revealing Tommy, who’s pressed into the bookshelf like he’s trying to merge with the pages. “You!”

“What do you want.” Tommy grits out, frowning intensely.

“Why are you here?!” Wilbur asks, turning to Techno. “Wait, when did he get here?”

“Like, fifteen minutes ago? Ten?” Techno makes a so-so hand gesture. “I don’t know, he came through the window.”

“Through the one we use?” Wilbur points a finger to his chest, thinking about the multiple times they’ve ‘snuck’ out using said window. At this point, the thing should just be another entrance. Wilbur slightly wonders why Phil hasn’t fixed it, even after all the times they just ditch class.

“You forgot to lock it.” Techno shrugs, Wilbur huffing.

“*You* forgot to lock it.”

“No, I would’ve remembered, I’m pretty sure-”

“It was your turn!”

“I did it the time before!”

“No, you-” Wilbur stops the beginning argument right there, waving his hands. “Okay, okay, whatever. That still doesn’t explain why you haven’t told Phil that the fucking child he’s looking for is right here.” He holds his hands out to Tommy, who scoffs.

“I can *hear* you-”

“I...can’t talk to the guards. Or go into the hallway.” Techno ignores Tommy, who crosses his arms with a glare.

“What?” Wilbur questions, Tommy explaining it for him.

“He pinky-promised.” Tommy nods, holding his finger up like he’s telling a fact, and Wilbur chokes on a laugh.

“You *what*?!” Wilbur snorts.

Techno closes his eyes, like it’ll let him leave the room if he just wishes hard enough. “I had questions, and so in exchange for answering them, I can’t sell him out.”

Wilbur laughs again.

Tommy seems to be happy with the turn of events, and he raises a finger to Wilbur, jabbing him in the arm. “Yeah, and you can’t sell me out either, or else I’ll die.”

“You know the entire castle is on lockdown, with the guards trying to find you, right?” Wilbur asks, batting Tommy’s hand away.

“Which is why I’m hiding in here!” Tommy insists, taking a step to stand behind Techno again. “They’re not going to look in the place with the two *princes*.”

“Huh.” Techno looks slightly surprised. “That’s actually kinda smart.”

“You’re saying that like I’m fucking dumb-”

“Okay, okay, but why do you need to hide?” Wilbur asks, resting a hand on his hip as Tommy peeks out from behind Techno. “You know Phil is just trying to find you.”

“If I get found I’m going to get fucking arrested, *your highness*.” Tommy supplies, saying the last two words with as much sarcasm he can muster. Wilbur feels like he’s never going to actually say that title seriously.

“You’re not going to get arrested.” Techno deadpans.

“Probably.” Wilbur adds on, shrugging, barely holding back a grin.

“Probably.”

Tommy narrows his eyes. “That’s not helping!”

“Look, I’m sure Phil won’t be mad, he’s just concerned about the fact that you threw yourself out a window into the freezing cold.” Wilbur says, Tommy making a face.

“Do you just escape your problems through jumping out the nearest window?” Technoblade asks, remembering the vague summary Tommy had given about earlier when he woke up this morning.

“It was only twice today, don’t give me that look.” Tommy mutters.

“Wait, what?” Wilbur asks.

“I’ll tell you later.” Techno waves a hand. “And, uh, while you’re here, can you call for Phil-”

“No, don’t do that-”

Wilbur takes a step back, and they all go into silence, Tommy going dead still from behind Techno, Techno wondering if the answers he got from Tommy today was really worth those fifteen minutes.

“HE’S IN HERE-” Wilbur screams, running for the door.

“Oh, you *motherfucker*!” Tommy runs after him, Techno just watching as the two of them fall out into the hallway, Tommy tacking into Wilbur’s side.

Needless to say, the guards are more than a little surprised.

“So.” Phil starts, clasping his hands together. “I’m hoping there’s a good reason as to why you just...climbed out a window.”

Tommy keeps his eyes firmly placed on the floor, ignoring the slight guilt that runs down his spine.

After Tommy had been found (on the ground, trying to strangle Wilbur apparently, who just seemed a mix between laughing and screaming) the lockdown and search was called off immediately, Phil showing up within minutes.

He came down the hallway with a rush, his mind racing with more than a few terrible scenarios, all of which died promptly the second he was presented with the image of Wilbur and Tommy trying to kill each other on the hallway floor, and Techno watching from the doorway while yelling for them to go for the eyes.

The last thing he should’ve done was laugh at the sight, but he couldn’t help it, half because it was ridiculous how Tommy, in all the places he could have been, had been hiding with Wilbur and Techno, half because the image of them bickering was just...something to smile at.

As much as he would’ve liked to have a moment to hang around with all three of them, Phil still needed to send Tommy home, so he got the two of them to get off the floor, and for Tommy to follow him down the hall to somewhere where they could talk in peace.

Although, as Phil went, he could see Techno leaning into Wilbur, holding a hand over his mouth as he spoke into his ear, pointing at Tommy’s back, the two of them smiling at Phil like they knew something he didn’t.

They probably did, knowing them.

And now here they were, a few minutes later, sitting in a quiet room with a fireplace beside them, and a blanket over Tommy's shoulders, because even if he insisted, Phil's sure he had to still be a bit cold from just going outside without even a proper sweater.

Tommy's unusually quiet, though, and he doesn't meet Phil's eyes, fingers pulling at the edges of the blanket in his hands.

"Come on, mate." Phil smiles, sitting across from Tommy. "It's fine if you got overwhelmed or something, just give me a warning next time." He laughs a little, and Tommy just seems to sink into his seat.

"It's not that, I just-" Tommy stops, then shrugs, not finishing his sentence.

Phil frowns, and he forces it into something kinder, holding back a sigh. "Look. It's probably been a long day for you, from what I've seen, and I'd bet you're tired."

Tommy glances up at him, blinking.

"Your aunt must be worried sick about where you are," I know I would be, he doesn't say, but he thinks it either way. "-and you're far from home, so I think it's about time you go back, yeah?"

"My aunt-" Tommy starts, stammering. "Well, it has been a really busy day, but in my defense, Tubbo is 90% percent of my impulse control, and this is like the first time I've gone without him for so long."

"Tubbo?" Phil repeats, Tommy nodding.

“He’s my best friend.” Tommy smiles, and he hesitates before speaking again, mouth opening and closing.

Phil smiles back at him, content with the thought of Tommy having someone he’s so close to back at home. He’s also just amused with the idea that without Tubbo, apparently, Tommy just naturally falls into chaos. Reminds him of Techno and Wilbur in a way. Together, those two can be the smartest in the room and the most chaotic, but apart, their thought process seems to lose a whole lot of common sense.

“I’m sure he’ll be glad when you get back.” Phil says, ignoring the smallest pang of regret as he says that.

“Yeah, and also pissed. I just took off without a word, technically. We’ve been together ever since we both got dropped off at the orphanage as babies.”

Phil freezes.

Tommy keeps going, tripping over his words a bit, but still getting them out. “And, and last night, it was the first night he was going to spend with his new room, because he just got adopted not that long ago, and I had to go back to the orphanage to sleep there, so it was the first time we weren’t sharing a room, too.”

“He was supposed to come meet me in the morning, or I was, I was going to run over to his place, but then I got sidetracked last night, and ended up waking up in a whole different town, where you know, the thing happened, where you nearly got stabbed-”

Phil can only blink, trying to say something and having nothing.

“And then I got into just a few fights and- yeah, now I’m here instead.” Tommy’s mouth clicks shut, his face slightly red. “He’s going to be pissed that I went off to meet the *emperor* instead of him.” Tommy laughs lightly, an awkward smile on his face.

Phil stares, eyes wide in shock as he processes Tommy's rambling, Tommy seeming to wilt more and more by the second, like he's waiting for Phil to explode.

"You-" Phil stops, Tommy curling his hands into fists in the blanket that's over his shoulders. "You don't have an aunt." Phil finally grasps onto the realization, Tommy grimacing.

"...no."

"Oh." Phil processes his words a little more, and, okay, he should not be having that feeling of hope rise in his chest at the news of Tommy not having an actual family, but- "*Oh*, you-"

"Sorry for, uh, lying." Tommy shrugs, and Phil nods quickly, barely holding back a smile.

"No, no, that's fine." Phil reassures, laughing a little. "That's- perfectly fine, mate."

Tommy nods slowly, kicking his legs slightly from where they hang just over the floor. Phil doesn't seem all that bothered that he's lied about some non-existent aunt, and he doesn't seem to be wondering why Tommy lied in the first place, instead he just gives Tommy a fond look, his wings shifting from behind him.

"Do you want to stay here, for the night?" Phil asks.

Tommy chokes, coughing. "W-what?!"

"No, you see, I was worried about any family not knowing where you were, since you weren't home, but if it's only your best friend, who's alright with his own family, then I'd rather you rest here, for the night, instead of starting on the long trip back down to town, you know?"

"I- But-" Tommy sputters, the blanket falling off his shoulders as he leans forward. "I couldn't actually stay *here*?"

“I could have a room set up easily.” Phil shrugs, grinning. “Believe me, we have plenty of space.”

Tommy loses his breath in one fell swoop, his nerves from earlier being completely overpowered now from the pure shock and disbelief.

Stay here, for the night.

Here?! In the castle, invited by the literal emperor?!

“But-” Tommy hits a hand to his forehead. “Tubbo, though, he’s probably worried sick, I don’t, I don’t know if I should...”

“Oh, that is true.” Phil hums. “How about he comes over tomorrow, up here?”

Tommy blinks. “To the castle?!”

“Yeah, mate.” Phil nods, grinning at how Tommy looks like he’s about to cough from choking on the air again. “What was his name? Tubbo?”

Tommy nods.

“Where’s your town? Actually, I have a map, you could point it out, that’d be easier, I could send a letter...”

“Uh, Niki?!” Ranboo’s voice comes from downstairs, Niki finishing where she had been tying her hair in a bun, looking at the mirror in the bathroom as she did to make sure she didn’t miss a strand of hair.

“Hold on!” Niki yells back, pulling at the band keeping her hair up. Ranboo and Tubbo were done baking for the day, and the ovens were off, so she’s fairly sure that it’s not a fire he’s calling her for, rather they must’ve messed up frosting the cakes terribly.

They’ve been busy baking for the rest of the day, trying to get Tubbo’s mind off the fact Tommy wasn’t around. It worked, for the most part, because it’s hard to keep worrying when you’re screaming along in the kitchen, trying to save a batch of cupcakes from looking terrible.

“I think you should probably hurry, actually!” Ranboo yells back, Niki looking away from the mirror with a confused face.

They didn’t go turning the ovens back on, did they?

“Niki, there’s a royal guard at the door!” She hears Tubbo yell this time, and she runs out of the bathroom, her hair staying neat, thankfully.

Quickly making her way down the stairs, she finds Tubbo behind the front counter, Ranboo at the front door, where a man with light armor stands, the empire’s symbol in his iron chestplate.

“I’m Eret, by the way.” He says, as Niki hops over the counter, not bothering to go around.

“I’m, uh, Ranboo.”

“Nice to meet you.”

“Hello!” Niki greets, Ranboo going to stand behind her as she finally makes her way to the door. It’s partially dark outside, sundown having more or less already passed, and the plaza from behind Eret being mostly empty by now, just a few people walking around to the shops that are still open. “What can I do for you?”

“Does someone named ‘Tubbo’ live here?” Eret asks, holding up a letter that looks rather fancy.

“That’s me!” Tubbo raises his hand up, heads turning to him, and he climbs over the counter, struggling for a moment, before getting over and making his way to the door, standing by Niki, who rests a hand onto his shoulder. “Is this about Tommy?”

“You know Tommy?” Eret questions, looking slightly surprised.

“...yes?” Tubbo makes a face, frowning just a bit. “What, what happened?”

“Here.” Eret holds out the letter, Tubbo taking it, eyes going wide at the symbol at the front of it.

“Woah, wait, that’s-” Ranboo says, leaning over Tubbo’s head to look at it.

“You and your family have been invited to come up to the castle tomorrow. Time and details should be in there.”

“To the-” Niki stammers, eyes wide. “Wait, the castle?”

“Yup.” Eret shrugs, grinning. “The Emperor would like to invite you over, after Tommy asked for Tubbo over there.”

Niki’s jaw drops, Ranboo sputtering.

The crinkle of paper sounds out, and Eret feels stuck in place as Tubbo stares at him, eyes burning, and they can't tell if Tubbo looks delighted, shocked, or pissed.

“He *what*.” Tubbo slowly says, almost crushing the letter in his grip.

Chapter End Notes

Tubbo rn: wha- you fucker- you MotherFucker- you- I Will Rain HELLFIRE UPON YOU- (Internally: OH GOOD HE'S ALIVE)

hope you liked this chap :D Sorry I took a while to upload, school hit me in the face, but now I'm caught up, doing great mentally, and I'm also not burning myself out (I'm actually getting sleep, pog!)

thanks for reading :)

Storytelling

Chapter Notes

cha cha real smooth

story go BRRRR

also *blows kiss* for those who always say this is their comfort fic. I Will Cry.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Phil had said he would set up a room for Tommy, he thought that meant that Tommy would be getting a simple guest room, something plain, but probably fancy, because he's in the castle, how can it *not* be fancy?

Tommy's slept in pretty much the same bed for most of his life, and he's always slept with Tubbo at his side, one way or another. He'll admit it's not the most comfortable bed, probably nothing compared to anything in the castle, but it's his bed, and he likes it, thank you very much. Even if it creaks whenever he shifts around, even if the blankets sometimes smell like dust, even if occasionally he'll find a spider or two lurking in the edges of the bed frame.

Surprisingly, finding spiders in his bed frame was not that common.

No, in the orphanage, you usually found those in the corners downstairs. There's a reason Tommy always hated sweeping duty.

He's not sure to be either glad or disappointed that he can't remember the first night he slept without Tubbo in the same room. But then again, last night he passed out by getting knocked in the head with a rock, and then woke up in a whole different town. So maybe it's better if he just purges the night from his memory completely.

God, it's been a long day.

The mental reminder seems to jumpstart his road to exhaustion, because as he walks with Phil through the halls, he can feel the frantic energy and excitement of the day drain away slowly. Part of him is still in absolute disbelief that he's in the castle, next to the actual fucking emperor, of all people, but Phil has a way of talking that Tommy tends to forget that's the emperor and not some cool guy off the street.

The halls they walk through are a pretty good reminder that Tommy's in the presence of royalty, though. Everything is so well lit, clean and pristine, and it's not like the streets Tommy's grown up in are mistreated, nor the building he grew up in, but he's grown up with a few broken lights, some faded clothes, dirt on the ground.

He feels almost out of place, *almost* being the key word. After a few minutes of pointing out where his town was, and where Tubbo would be, he had been given another set of clothes, at Phil's insistence. Tommy tried protesting at first, because sure, his clothes were slightly damp from rolling around in the snow outside, but they were still fine. Tommy's fallen into ice-cold puddles before and his clothes were still fine even if they were slightly soaked, according to his standards.

But he got handed another set of clothes anyway, and Tommy couldn't exactly refuse, because well, free stuff, and also he's being handed something from royalty. You don't just turn that down.

So here he is, walking by Phil's side, dressed up in light blue shades, blending in just fine with the person beside him. He's never had clothes that were so *neat*, all his shirts are wrinkled in one way or another, either that or faded. This feels like it's brand new, like it was just made and immediately given as a gift.

Tommy's not sure if he's going to have to give this back or not when he's eventually sent away from the castle, but he's going to cross his fingers that he gets to keep it, because this is definitely going to become his favorite shirt.

It takes a while for them to walk through the halls, and while the sheer size of everything makes Tommy's head spin, he's pretty confident that if he had a map he could figure it out. Maybe.

Or not. He's reminded again that he got so lost that he ended up in an entirely new town.

Phil looks more amused than anything at how Tommy constantly tilts his head back to look up at the ceilings, the lights, eyeing the doors they pass, curious to know what's in each room.

Phil seems just more smiley in general, actually. His mood was always smiley, and friendly, right off the bat when Tommy met him, but right now it's as if something wonderful has happened, like they're in the middle of celebrating a holiday. He seems cheery, and it sticks to Tommy, who walks with his head high, grinning even with how tired he's starting to get.

Thankfully, they do eventually get to the guest rooms.

Or rather, the living quarters.

Tommy follows Phil past the entrance of a hall, where there are two guards in their way, that only nod and move to the side as Phil passes them. This hall is different from the other ones Tommy's walked through in the castle, he notices right off the bat, because it's a lot more...homey feeling.

The lights are just a bit dimmer over Tommy's head, the walls around them are less intricate and nice looking, and instead more simple. There's objects hanging on the walls, and Tommy has to take a double take when he sees actual *swords* .

There's a few doors at which Phil points to as they pass them, and Tommy's mind buffers as Phil names them out.

"This is my room." Phil says, pointing to a closed white door.

“Here’s Techno’s, this one is Wilbur’s.” Phil continues, Tommy’s steps faltering as his eyes flick back and forth to the rooms, trying to think about what’s inside, and also trying to figure out why the hell the guest rooms are so close to the actual heirs of the throne.

“And here’s...” Phil reaches the last door, turning the doorknob as Tommy leans in, eyes wide. “Yours.”

“What.” Tommy chokes out, his voice sounding like the air has been knocked out from his lungs.

“This is your room.” Phil repeats, looking to Tommy with a smile, and Tommy stares back at him. He thinks he’s maybe stopped breathing. Phil doesn’t seem to notice how Tommy is just staring in shock, and he goes to walk in, continuing on. “Sorry for the boxes in the corner, to be honest, this was just something like a storage room, before.”

Tommy finally rips his eyes away from Phil, stuck at the doorway as he looks inside to find a bedroom, with a bed that’s bigger than his and Tubbo’s combined, a small fireplace, and- is that a fucking balcony.

Phil snickers a little at Tommy’s expression, his mouth wide open as he looks around, not a word coming from him.

Resting a hand on the boxes that sit in the corner, Phil tries to remember what he put in here. There’s a few things that aren’t his, like a small, beat up wooden sword and a broken guitar leaning against the wall. Phil can’t help but smile fondly at seeing that, and also be slightly annoyed, because he told the twins to put those away, dammit, not hide them into the extra room. Of course they put them in here rather than properly putting them away.

“I’ll get someone to put these away later.” Phil says out loud, lifting his head back up to Tommy, who’s still stuck at the doorway, as if something is keeping him from getting in. His mouth is clicked shut the moment Phil turns his head to him, but he doesn’t take a step in, only staring at Phil as if he’s gone insane. “You good, mate?”

“What the fuck.” Tommy is able to get out, holding his hands to his chest as he looks at the room again. “What, what the fuck? I get to sleep *here*?”

Phil barely holds back a laugh. “Well, I’m not showing you the room just for you to not sleep in it.”

“I can’t sleep here! Your room-” Tommy takes a step back into the hall, pointing a hand up. “-is literally down the hall!”

“Convenient, huh?” Phil agrees, Tommy sputtering. “If you need anything, you can knock on my door. Or Wilbur’s and Techno’s, but then again, sometimes they’re heavy sleepers.”

“If I-” Tommy hits a hand to his forehead, pushing his hair back, letting out a big puff of air. “Holy- Your majesty, this is-”

“Phil.” Phil gently corrects.

“I- Your Grace-” Tommy stammers out.

“Phil.”

“Phil!” Tommy yells, almost exasperated. “Is- what is that?” He asks, staring at the door across the room that he hopes is just a weird looking closet.

Phil huffs, turning around and glancing to Tommy, before walking over the said doors. “The balcony?”

Tommy makes a sound like he’s dying. Phil seems to brush it off, pushing the doors open, a cold breeze coming in. Tommy’s attention falls to Phil’s wings, in full view as he looks outside.

After a second more of panic, Tommy decides he can totally handle this, and finally walks into the room, hesitantly coming up behind Phil as he stands at the doorway, freezing air gushing in.

“I think the snow is easing up.” Phil notes, looking to Tommy as he joins him at his side, looking outside, but not quite stepping outside.

The view is a bit foggy, with the clouds overhead and the snow falling through the air, but Tommy can tell that it's sundown, the sky starting to dim. There's a stab of fear at it being late and still not being home, but Tommy's able to push it down for a moment longer, squinting out to where he can towns, far off.

He leans a little bit forward, wrapping his arms around himself as the cold sets in, and Phil laughs.

“Here, come on, come on.” Phil tugs him forward by the sleeve, raising a wing out and over Tommy's head as they walk out onto the balcony. Phil keeps him close, and Tommy looks with wide eyes past the snow, at the glimpse of towns and communities that are visible from the top of the mountain.

It looks so much smaller from up here. Tommy wonders if he can see Tubbo's home from here.

“This is insane.” Tommy breathes out, Phil smiling. “You live up here.”

“You get used to the cold.” Phil grins, and Tommy just snorts. He glances up at the wing over his head, keeping snow out of his hair, and he can't help but stare at the feathers, mind racing. For the moment, Tommy forgets about the ridiculous room he's been given for the night, sorta forgets about the fact he's in the literal castle.

Instead he just grins at Phil, face red from the cold wind. Phil smiles back, looking over the railings of the balcony.

“Have you ever, like,” Tommy trails off, yawning, before shaking it off. “Have you ever jumped off the edge of here? To fly?”

“Sometimes.” Phil shrugs, looking up at the cloudy skies. “Occasionally, I just go for a night fly when the weather clears up.”

Tommy looks up at the sky, trying to imagine himself flying that high, in this temperature. Phil said he’s used to it, although Tommy’s not, he’s used to the warmth of the street back home. But he’s pretty sure if he layered up properly, he wouldn’t freeze to death in the first five minutes. Probably.

“It’s a good view.” Phil tells him quietly, and Tommy nods for lack of a better response. “Come on, let’s get inside, the last thing you need is to get sick.”

Phil leaves him in the room not long after that, Tommy flopping down on the bed and deciding that he’s not moving for the next hour, at *least* .

That, with the warmth from the fireplace that Phil started up, it’s perfect conditions for Tommy to kick his shoes off and bury himself into the blankets and pillows. It’s soft, almost too soft, and he curls up at the center of the bed, blinking slowly at the ceiling.

He tries to go over the events of what happened today, (holy shit, has it literally been one *day* ?) and he really can’t decide if this is the worst or the best luck he’s ever had.

On one hand, woke up in a royal guards office, nearly got arrested, nearly got stabbed, got into a fight.

On the other, won that fight, met the emperor, got into the fucking castle, got his own cool as hell room for the night, and-

Tommy jolts up, yanking himself out of the sleepy mood as he digs in his pocket. His hand grasps around a small crumpled up bag, and he pulls it out, smiling.

He's still got Tubbo's cookies.

They're broken as hell, practically just a big pile of crumbs at this point, but he still has them. A good reminder of the fact that he's going to be murdered in front of the royal family tomorrow. He knows Tubbo. That lunatic would not hesitate to tackle Tommy even if the entire empire was watching.

Brushing off his imminent doom, Tommy's already settled with the fact he's had a good life, and he opens up the bag to pour the broken pieces out onto his palm, tossing it back into his mouth.

He's extra careful to not drop any crumbs on the bed, mostly because he doesn't want to go to sleep with crumbs in his sheets.

Finishing the last remains of the cookie crumbs, Tommy brushes any last bits off his mouth, tucking the small bag into his pocket again and looking past his bed to the fireplace, which burns with warmth, keeping the cold away.

What was it that Phil said he was going to go do? Paperwork? It makes sense if he's busy, Tommy's surprised he even had time to spend the day with Tommy, shouldn't the emperor be really busy?

Tommy's head backtracks, and he vaguely remembers hearing Phil push back all his meeting the second he saw Tommy.

He is definitely having a lucky day, he's decided.

Turning his attention to the boxes stacked up in the corner, Tommy stares at them for a moment, his eyes landing on a particular wooden sword, leaning innocently against the wall.

Uhg, he really doesn't want to get out of this bed.

But sword.

But this is the comfiest bed he's ever *had* .

But *sword* .

Tommy swings his feet off the bed, his socks moving against the carpet lightly, as if someone might walk in at any moment and demand why he's not asleep. He's tired, for sure, but sword.

Leaning down and grabbing it from the floor, Tommy raises it up, observing the little nicks and scratches across the blade. He's half-glad it's wood, because it means he's not going to be stabbing himself anytime soon, but he's also slightly disappointed because he wants a cool sword, like an actual one.

His mind wanders to the ones hanging up outside, but he abandons that thought, instead raising the small wooden sword in front of him, grinning wide.

There's a mirror placed at the side of the bed, and Tommy walks in front of it, raising the sword up before swinging it down through the air, barely holding back a giggle.

It's not a real sword, but it's still cool, and there's small designs carved into the handle.

Tommy swings it around a few times more, before looking back to the stuff and seeing the guitar. There's strings missing, and it looks like it got dropped off a roof, but Tommy still kneels down to look at it closer anyway.

Putting the sword back to where it was, he holds a hand out to the string still intact and plucks one, an incredibly out of tune noise coming from it.

Who knows how to play guitar? Tommy wants to guess Phil, if only because Phil is just amazing, but it doesn't seem like him. Which means it's one of the princes, but Tommy doesn't know anything about them.

Giving up on his speculations, he rises to his feet, considering for a moment on looking through the boxes as well. But the bed is calling his name, and he's yawning again, dragging a hand across his face.

Walking back to the bed, Tommy climbs back under the blankets, shifting and rolling over until he's comfortable.

He realizes this is more or less the first time he's ever sleeping alone, without Tubbo, and he digs the empty bag for cookies out of his pocket, squeezing it in his hand.

He wonders what Tubbo is doing. Maybe he's making a cake. Or burning a cake, more like. As much as Tommy is slightly scared of Tubbo's reaction at the shit Tommy's gotten himself into, he's also looking forward to just seeing Tubbo again.

Call him clingy, but he just wants Tubbo.

Tommy quietly drifts off with the empty bag in his hand, underneath blankets that are ridiculously soft.

There's a banging on the door, dragging Tommy out of his sleep, and he groans, grabbing a pillow and turning over, holding the soft material over his head.

"Tubbo, go open it." Tommy mutters out, hearing another knock, and he awaits for the grumbling protest of Tubbo insisting that Tommy goes to open it, to see what one of the caretakers want this late.

But he doesn't get a response, and Tommy sighs as the knocking keeps going, insistent and annoying. "Tubbo?" He mumbles, and he's greeted with the sight of a pillow, and the wall of a room.

Room.

This isn't his room?

Wait-

"I think he's a heavy sleeper."

"I'm trying to knock, shut up-"

"Knock louder."

"I'm knocking as loud as I can!"

"Well, it's not enough to wake him, clearly-"

Tommy hears bickering from outside his door, and he jolts up from the bed, blinking sleep out of his eyes. What time is it? A glance at the window tells that it's dark outside, so he must've gotten at least a few hours of sleep. That doesn't explain the knocking though-

"Alright, screw it- I'm knocking to be polite-!" He hears Wilbur chime, the door swinging open. "-but I'm asserting my status as a prince by coming in anyway!"

"What the fuck." Tommy is only able to respond, watching as the two of them waltz in like they belong, and like Tommy wasn't trying to sleep just a few seconds ago.

"Good morning." Techno delivers, but he doesn't sound very enthusiastic as he closes the door behind him. He's holding a book in his hands, and Tommy's too focused on it to notice Wilbur circling around the bed and jumping on beside Tommy.

"It's not morning." Wilbur frowns.

"Eh." Techno waves a hand.

"Get off the bed- I'm sleeping!" Tommy tries smacking a pillow into Wilbur's face, Wilbur ducking.

"But now you're awake!" Wilbur smiles brightly back, grabbing the pillow in Tommy's grasp and yanking it away.

"I was *sleeping* , before you fucking-"

"That's great, anyway-"

"Oh, hey, these are still here." Techno puts the book in his hands to the side, on a drawer, and he leans down to grab the wooden sword from before, twirling it in his hand. "This is *old* ."

“Is that your wooden sword?” Wilbur asks, Tommy blinking as Techno swings it around, testing it out with a huff.

“I forgot I put it here.” Technoblade shrugs, Wilbur scoffing. “Your guitar is here.”

Wilbur makes a confused face. “I don’t remember putting that in here. I thought you threw it away.”

Techno shrugs easily, putting the sword back.

“Fantastic, those are your things, are we done.” Tommy deadpans, Wilbur smiling like a maniac as he turns to him. “Why are you here?” He whines, trying to fix his hair, which is sticking up in all kinds of wild directions.

Tommy is kinda intrigued to know the story behind the objects, but he’s also tired, and he wants to sleep. Preferably without princes barging into the room.

“Well, I think it’s unfair Technoblade got to have a nice conversation with you, while I barely got a word in at dinnertime-”

“You called me a child.” Tommy narrows his eyes.

Wilbur continues without a single hint of regret. “I did, and I would do it again, however-”

“Are you an orphan?” Technoblade asks, Wilbur hitting a hand to his face.

“That’s rude, why the fuck do you want to know-”

Techno looks at the wooden sword, crossing his arms.

“-well maybe you’re curious, yeah, so what if I am, what of it-”

“Told you.” Techno says to Wilbur, Wilbur rolling his eyes. “I called it.”

“No you didn’t.” Wilbur huffs.

“I did, I did, I said, ‘Phil wouldn’t bring a random kid here for no *reason*’ and I was right-”

Wilbur throws the pillow at Techno, Techno ducking out of the way with a barely hidden grin. “Shut the fuck up, you’re ruining my chance at being the favorite-”

“You surrendered those chances at the first impression-” Techno says, grabbing the pillow from the floor.

“Why are you hereee.” Tommy says loudly, not in the mood to even understand what they’re bickering about.

“For knowledge!” Wilbur turns to Tommy, getting smacked in the back of the head as Techno launches the pillow at him. “You motherfucker-” He turns back around, Techno skillfully pretending he’s done no wrong as he walks over with the book from earlier in his hands.

“I bring gifts.” Techno says, throwing the book and stepping back as Wilbur tries to swing a pillow at him. Tommy grabs at the book as Wilbur scrambles to climb across the bed so he can reach Techno and properly smack him across the head.

He skims through the pages, ignoring the sounds of scuffling and swearing beside him, and he wakes up a little more as he realizes it’s a book about the nether, the first few pages talking about creating a portal, gathering obsidian.

“What is this?” Tommy asks, looking up, Technoblade in the process of suffocating Wilbur under a pillow on the ground.

“Uh, it’s a book about the resources and environment of the nether, there’s multiple books, actually-” Techno stumbles back as he gets jabbed in the shoulder, Wilbur escaping.

“That’s just the first one. We’ve had to read it like a million times over, Techno’s read practically everything that’s about the nether as a whole-” Wilbur continues, Techno grabbing the pillow and tossing back onto the bed, ending the fight there.

Tommy reads over the pages, his muddled brain still not quite grasping the information in the book, but he’s still incredibly interested. Him and Tubbo have talked time and time again about monsters, biomes, other realms.

The nether, he’s never been there, why would he have been, he’s never had a reason. But he’s heard about the fuckton of lava and creatures that live there, and like any teen, he’s curious as hell.

Wilbur kneels up on the ground, leaning his elbows onto Techno’s shoulders as Technoblade just sits on the floor with his legs crossed. “We’d thought you like it, there’s a stupid amount of stories we could tell you-”

“You’ve been there?!” Tommy asks, snapping his head up from the book, eyes wide.

“Once or twice.” Techno tilts his head, Wilbur scoffing lightly.

“We’ve gone with Phil a couple times. It’s hot as fuck.”

“I lost a sword there once.” Techno frowns, like he’s just remembered.

“You dropped it into lava-”

“By *accident*- ”

“That’s-” Tommy cuts himself off, laughing lightly as he flips through the book. “That’s so cool.”

The most interesting thing Tommy’s ever done is this entire day, really. But these two, they’ve gone to the nether? Multiple times?

They’ve become just slightly less annoying in Tommy’s eyes.

“Any stories you would like to hear?” Wilbur asks, quickly getting up and jumping onto the bed again, Tommy scooting back. “I’ve got plenty, like when Technoblade-”

“No.” Techno cuts him off.

“I haven’t even started.”

“But I know you’re just going to ruin my reputation.”

Tommy tries to think. What could he ask? He has so much he could know, if they’re willing to tell him. He could ask about the ghosts, the pigman, the lava. If they’ve gone with Phil plenty of times-

Tommy’s mind stutters. And he gets a perfect idea.

“Actually,” Tommy closes the book, looking up to Wilbur. “Uh, what about when Phil went to the End?”

Wilbur blinks, Techno looking just as thrown off.

“Surely he’s told you guys the details, right?”

Tommy knows the general gist of it. Phil went to the End, killed the dragon, unlocked magic, and built the Empire. But if anyone knows the better story version, it’s got to be his sons.

And to be honest, Tommy really wants to hear about a dragon.

“Uhhh.” Wilbur blinks again, glancing to Techno, and they seem to silently question something, communicating through tilted heads, pointed looks. Finally, Wilbur seems to nod, and he looks to Tommy. “Right! Where Phil found the portal, found a dragon, then-”

“I’ll tell it.” Techno says, getting up from the floor, sitting down on the bed as Wilbur scoots over to sit beside Tommy. “Dad’s told us the story a million times, I could say it in my sleep.”

“You always told him to retell it.” Wilbur reminds, smiling.

“Shush.” Techno waves a hand, Tommy putting the book to the side. “How did he always start it?”

“The portal, finding the portal.” Wilbur nods, Tommy glancing between them both.

“That was the boring part, but it’s the start.” Techno yawns, brushing his hair back. “It was also the longest part. Phil’s not actually from around here, you know, he was born somewhere really far off, across the lands. He only came here after hearing the stories about the End and deciding that he wanted some adventure.”

“He had to kill multiple enderman and travel to the nether for certain materials before he was even able to start looking for the actual portal, then he had to figure out from other travelers who to craft an eye.”

“An eye?” Tommy asks.

“Eye of Ender.” Wilbur leans his chin against his palm, holding up a hand as if he’s holding something. “Looks like an eyeball, it powers the portal and is like a compass straight towards it. I’ve only ever seen one twice. It’s not something you find laying around, you have to make it.”

“And figuring out how to make it was the hard part, because whoever Phil asked at the time thought he was crazy. People never came back from the End. It was a death wish.” Techno continues, Tommy nodding. “After a while though, he did figure it out, he got multiple of them and traveled a really long way, all the way up to this mountain, where he found it.”

“The portal is in the mountain?” Tommy questions, tilting his head.

Wilbur huffs. “Don’t bother looking for it. Phil sealed it up a long time ago.”

Techno gives a small smile to Wilbur, like they’re saying something telepathically, and he goes on. “He went in through the portal, which is a one way ticket. There’s no turning back once you’re in. And once he was in, he realized exactly why people didn’t come back.”

“Dragon.” Wilbur waves his hands, Tommy rolling his eyes, waiting for Techno to go on.

“Phil says that when it flies over, you can feel the rumbling in the ground and air. And it was loud enough to leave his ears ringing.”

“He also said that each time it roared, you could feel it in your chest. Honestly, he was terrified, he hid out in the ground for a solid few hours while trying to think of how to

survive.” Wilbur adds, Tommy trying to imagine a dragon flying over his head, dangerous and deadly.

“In the End, Phil said that it’s a giant floating island over an endless void. There’s ten pillars on the island, in a circle.” Techno draws out a circle in the blankets, and Tommy tries to imagine it as he goes on. “Phil figured out that the pillars healed the dragon, so anything he did, it was useless as long as the pillars were intact.”

“There were crystals, at the very top, and these pillars were tall, if you fell, you’d probably die. Not only that, but the only way to break the crystals was to have it end in an explosion. He learnt that the hard way, and nearly fell off. It took forever, but he one by one destroyed each crystal, then got ready to actually face the dragon.”

“He was running out of arrows pretty quickly in, and every now and then, the dragon would fly down to his level, so he would use his sword instead. He got kicked back hard enough to break a rib a couple times, but he had armor, so he lived.”

“After a long time of fighting, Phil shot well enough to hit an arrow into the dragon’s actual eye, and it made it fall onto the ground. So, Phil, having lost his sword at that point, and being very nearly dead, used an axe instead and went up to the dragon. He swung it into its chest and killed it, right there.”

Chapter End Notes

it's 1 am for me right now, so if you see a typo, no you dont, i'll fix it in the morning

hope you enjoyed! This was supposed to be longer but I got tired so L

thanks for reading

Late night snacks

Chapter Notes

HAHAHAHAHAHA

ehem

enjoy the chapter <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno goes on to describe what happened after Phil finally ended that fight, stabbing an axe into the heart of a dragon.

There had been a blinding light, so bright that Phil couldn't see anything for a long moment, then it disappeared, and with it, the dragon he killed. The island was left with just him, and a few endermen who were scattered, far off.

“What?!” Tommy cuts in, Wilbur snorting at the way he sounds so appalled. “It just *disappeared* ?!”

“I wasn't done.” Technoblade mutters, since Tommy cut him off mid-sentence. Tommy keeps going anyway.

“It's a huge fucking dragon, you're telling me it just-” Tommy waves his hands up, making a sound that he's sure describes what he's feeling right now.

Technoblade makes a face like he can't decide if he wants to laugh or still be insulted that he was interrupted. Tommy personally thinks he looks stupid.

“Well, what do you think happened to the body?” Wilbur asks with a scoff, leaning back.

“It fell off into the void, didn’t it?” Tommy asks, Wilbur and Techno sharing a glance.

“Eh, the story gets kinda warped around the kingdom.” Techno shrugs. “But this is Phil’s first hand experience, the actual story from the guy who *went* there. It disappeared with magic.”

“Bullshit.” Tommy calls, crossing his arms.

“That’s what happened!” Technoblade yells, throwing his arms up. Wilbur laughs.

“Go on, go on, tell the rest.” Wilbur suggests.

After the dragon disappeared, a portal had opened up at the center of the island, seemingly the only way out, other than jumping into the void below. With nothing else to choose, and the dragon gone, Phil went through, and came out on the other side, back in the overworld.

Except, he was back in the overworld with wings on his back, and he was in the middle of the forest, near his hometown. He had been sent back to where he started. So then he went on to return back to the portal.

“How’d he get the wings?” Tommy questions, cutting Technoblade off, this time not mid-sentence, thankfully.

“He went through the portal.” Wilbur repeats, Tommy frowning.

“Yeah, but-” Tommy falters, searching for the right question. “How did he get them? Like, how did they get on his back?”

“He left the End with no wings, and arrived in the Overworld with wings.” Techno drawls, Tommy frowning. “He said he was really thrown off by them, he had to teach himself how to fly.”

“But how did he make them appear?”

“He didn’t. The portal gave them to him.”

Tommy huffs, leaning back and falling onto the pillows behind him. “That’s also bullshit.”

Wilbur gives a small laugh, turning his head to Tommy. “How else would he have gotten his wings?”

“I don’t know, maybe he was born with them? He only used them to fight the dragon, and then just decided to keep them unhidden the rest of the time?” Tommy gives as a response.

Technoblade shakes his head. “Nope, he didn’t have wings before.”

“Are you sure.” Tommy stresses.

“Mhhmm, pretty sure.”

“He’s the first and only one to ever have wings.” Wilbur tells Tommy. “Although, plenty of other people started to pop up with certain features.” He says, flicking a finger at his own pointed ear, Tommy only now realizing that he’s the only one in this room with *round* ears.

“Phil thinks we might be of nether descent, actually.” Technoblade says, reaching over to take the book that’s laying next to Tommy, flipping the pages open. “Which could be true, we’re both partially immune to lava, although there’s no *real* way of knowing.

“You’re *what* ?” Tommy asks, very much interested in that idea, but he backtracks a bit on Wilbur’s words. “Wait, what do you mean Phil’s the only one?”

“He’s the only one to ever have wings.” Technoblade answers, eyes stuck on the pages as he skims through it. He’s read these words a million times, he’s practically memorized it.

“He can’t be really.” Tommy sits up, turning and letting his legs hang off the bed, head turned to the twins. “I mean, there’s a bunch of people with like, magic and shit, right? I know someone who’s probably part endermen.”

“Ooh, really?” Wilbur asks.

“He’s really tall, his skin is strange.” Tommy waves off, not wanting to elaborate on Ranboo, because that’ll make his thought process snowball into thinking about Tubbo, and he would like to postpone the conversation about his imminent death, thank you very much. “But, moving on, the empire is huge, right? Surely, there’s someone else with wings?”

“We’ve looked.” Wilbur shrugs, smiling hesitantly. “Phil’s looked, believe me. He’s asked around, he’s put out searches, but nothing’s ever come up. He’s the only one that we know of.”

“No one else?” Tommy insists. “At all?”

“When we say he’s the only one, it means, he’s the only one.” Technoblade says, looking up from the book. “Besides, he’s stopped searching for now. Busy with the Empire and everything.”

Tommy blinks, swallowing down a weird feeling in his throat. “Oh.” He wonders how Phil would react if he knew he’s finally found someone like him. “Well, I still think the dragon part of that story is bullshit.”

“That’s what happened-!”

“Allright, we did come in here to give you the book, although we also had something else planned.” Wilbur claps his hands together, successfully preventing Technoblade from wanting to snipe a teen with a pillow.

“We did?” Techno asks, closing the book.

Wilbur gives him a look, unimpressed. “Yes, we- The kitchens.”

“I thought you were joking with that.” Technoblade hums, but he goes to get off the bed anyway, putting the book down on the nightstand. “Although I could go for some food.”

“I *told* you- Okay, just, go scare the guards off.” Wilbur waves his hands in a shooing motion, Technoblade snorting and grabbing the wooden sword from where it leans against the wall, making his way to the door and leaving it open as he walks down the hall. He gives a sarcastic salute to Wilbur as he leaves. Wilbur just rolls his eyes.

“What’s he doing?” Tommy questions, Wilbur getting to his feet and walking around the bed to pull Tommy to his feet as well. “What are you doing?”

“Right now, Phil is busy with some late night Emperor stuff, and the castle is quiet. Which means, *we-*” Tommy stumbles as he’s pulled away from the most amazing bed he’s ever had. “-can go sneak off to the kitchens for a late-night snack.”

“Aren’t we going to get in trouble?!” Tommy yanks back, Wilbur turning around to look at him. Tommy’s grateful for how nice Phil is, he’s stupidly generous to the point where Tommy’s kinda confused, but he doesn’t want to go sneaking around if it means he’s going to be arrested. Well, maybe he won’t be arrested, exactly, if he’s sneaking around with the actual princes, but he’s definitely going to be in trouble.

“What, are you scared?” Wilbur grins, and Tommy’s entire attitude is changed in a second, pushing Wilbur towards the door.

“No, fuck no!” Tommy snaps. “I can do what I want.”

“Then we’re going to go sneak off to the kitchens.” Wilbur nods, Tommy huffing. “Me and Technoblade have done it plenty of times, Phil always goes to bed late, we never get caught. Usually.”

“Usually.” Tommy repeats, not feeling comforted. “Hold on, wait, I don’t have my shoes on.”

“You can walk without shoes, the halls are clean enough.” Wilbur shrugs off, poking his head out the door, seeing Technoblade walk back down the hall, the guards that are usually at the end now gone. “You can actually slide across them if you run fast enough.”

“Can you?” Tommy asks, eyeing the hallway with interest. “Well, I’m not going to just run around being the only one in my socks.”

“What, you want me to take off my shoes?” Wilbur asks, lingering in the doorway and looking at Tommy with a displeased face.

“Yes.”

“I’m going to give a no.”

“Then you’re being quite mean to me.”

Technoblade joins in on their conversation. “Actually, it would be more quiet if we snuck around without shoes.” He adds, Wilbur looking at him with narrowed eyes, Tommy giving an almost evil smile. “Just saying.”

A few minutes later, Tommy is following Wilbur down a hall, Technoblade right behind them, shoes gone as per Tommy's request.

Wilbur was right about the sliding thing, they tried it out a few times, stopping at a particular hall and Tommy running as fast as he could, sliding across the floor and trying to not fall backwards.

"You've got to build up speed, and keep your balance, don't lean back. Don't hit your head either, because if you get hurt, Dad's going to kill us." Wilbur instructs, Technoblade sitting on the floor at the end of the hall. He waits beside the wall, waiting to do damage control when Tommy inevitably trips and falls.

"I've got it, I've got it." Tommy mutters, taking a few steps back. "I've done this with Tubbo before." Back at the orphanage, when they had sweeping duty, and instead of sweeping the halls they tried sliding across the floor with a folded blanket. They had gotten in trouble for that, half because they didn't sweep, half because Tubbo had gotten slammed into the wall hard enough to get a concussion. Tubbo's sturdy, though, he was fine. Mostly.

"Tubbo?" Wilbur asks, but Tommy waves him off, going into a sprint, and sliding down the hall with a whoop. "Who's Tubbo?!" Wilbur yells after him, but Tommy just expertly slides away from that question.

Then he nearly slams into a wall, Technoblade having to practically tackle him to get him to slow down.

After a few minutes of Tommy tripping over on the floor repeatedly and zooming through the hall at the speed of sound, Wilbur does drag them off to their actual destination, before Tommy ends up giving himself a concussion.

Tommy is just mostly annoyed that Technoblade is ridiculously good at keeping his balance when sliding across the floor. He had even done a spin at one point, truly just showing off. Wilbur had booed at him from the end of the hall, Tommy joining in.

They had quickly abandoned their booing when Technoblade turned his attention to them and started sprinting though, more focused on getting away.

They walk now, making their way through the halls, Wilbur at Tommy's left, Technoblade at his right. He's busy poking at the back of his hand, which still kinda hurts from when it got hit against a wall. Better his hand than his head, though.

Technoblade said it wasn't broken, but Tommy begs to differ.

"Stop poking at your hand." Wilbur nudges Tommy in the shoulder, Tommy huffing.

"It's broken."

"It's not broken. Bruised, maybe-" Technoblade says, Tommy just glaring at him as a response.

"It feels pretty broken."

"Does it really? Phil's going to kill us." Wilbur mumbles under his breath. "Technoblade-"

"I already *checked*- " Technoblade holds out a hand, and Tommy gives his palm for Technoblade to poke at it. "Your fingers seem fine. You can wait till morning, if it still hurts by then, *then* we can tell Phil about it."

"Then I can tell him you broke my fucking hand."

“I didn’t do anything, blame Will.” Technoblade lets go of Tommy’s hand, pointing a finger to Wilbur, who makes an offended noise.

“Sure, okay- look, look, the kitchens are over here.” Wilbur walks ahead, Tommy following at his heels to go through a tall door that swings easily when they push it open.

Tommy’s hit with the smell of something sweet and yet also burnt, and he’s reminded of the bakery back home. His mood is significantly dampened with the fact that Tubbo isn’t going to be here till tomorrow.

Wilbur seems to notice the sudden drop in mood, and he pushes Tommy along, walking over to what looks to be a wall of ovens. It’s warm, and Tommy hears the sound of some pans being moved around clanging loudly against each other.

“No, that’s not the right bowl!” He hears from around the corner, and he finds two people standing by a table, ingredients scattered around.

“What do you mean it’s not the right bowl, it’s a bowl!” Quackity waves around a wooden spoon, Karl slapping a hand onto his own face.

“No, you’re supposed to- that one, over there-”

“It’s the same!” Quackity insists.

“It’s a different size, you’re going to dirty a big bowl for no reason-”

“Hello!” Wilbur chimes, the two of them turning their heads, freezing.

“Oh no.” Quackity says under his breath as he spots the familiar faces of the twins.

“Hello, your highness!” Karl greets back, waving at Wilbur. Quackity just points his spoon towards Wilbur while yelling.

“You know, one of these days, His Majesty is going to ban you from going through the *goddamn* pantries! Every single night, without fail, I swear-”

“We don’t come here *every* night.” Technoblade defends, Wilbur nodding. “It’s more like every week.”

Quackity smacks the table with the spoon, sighing loudly and hanging his head over the mess of flour on the table. “Yeah, yeah.”

He turns his attention to Tommy, his mood simmering down into confusion. “Hold on, who’s this?”

“Oh!” Karl smacks a hand against Quackity’s arm repeatedly, leaning in to whisper loudly. “That’s the new kid, from earlier this morning? Uh, what was his name, Timmy? Tom?” Tommy makes a face at being called ‘Timmy’.

“Thomas!” Quackity greets, waving his arms out. “Ey, nice to meet you, man. I hope you’re not going to be here as often as these fuckers-” He points a thumb to Technoblade and Wilbur. “-stealing food right out of the storage, every time-”

“Hey, technically this is our kitchen.” Wilbur points out, Quackity shaking his head as Karl snickers into his palm.

“I don’t see you using it, you just come in for snacks at ungodly times of the night-”

“Midnight is the best time for food.” Technoblade shrugs.

“I won’t be as bad as them.” Tommy cuts in, voice confident as he scoffs. He’s not going to be *that* long. “I’m just here for the night, anyways.” He answers Quackity, and the kitchen seems to go still, everyone staring at him.

Tommy blinks, too aware of how there are eyes on him, and how Quackity has gone from cussing out Wilbur to just blinking at Tommy with a confused face.

“What?” Tommy asks, shifting his weight from one foot to the other.

“Wait, no one’s told him?” Karl asks, looking at Technoblade, pointing a finger towards Tommy, who looks at him with a bewildered expression.

Wilbur and Techno share a glance from behind Tommy, and Wilbur immediately goes to push Tommy forward, laughing nervously as Technoblade coughs suspiciously. “OKAYYY- How about some food? Tommy, come look at the pantry-”

“Wait, told me what-?” Tommy goes to question, but Wilbur’s pushing him along and they pass the table, Karl barely stifling his giggling as Quackity holds his hands up in surrender as Technoblade points a threatening finger his way.

There is so much more food than Tommy thought there’d be.

Really, he should’ve expected it, seeing as it’s the castle, royal kitchens, but it’s a lot different than the kitchens back at the orphanage. He thought that was a lot of food, it’s nothing compared to this.

There’s rows upon rows of supplies, a bunch of different ingredients and snacks, and Wilbur actually pulls a *ladder* down one of the rows to reach something on a shelf.

“Hey, Tommy, catch.” Wilbur says, throwing down a box from where he’s standing up on the ladder.

Tommy scrambles to rush forward, snatching the box out of the air. It’s a bright red, actually a bit familiar, Tommy feels like he’s seen it before. He shakes it.

“What’s this?” Tommy asks, Technoblade plucking it out of his hands and opening up a small hole at the corner.

He pours out chocolate chips, eating them just like that. Tommy’s reminded of where he’s seen it before, at the local stores, the red box sitting on the shelves. He’s never bought a box just to eat them like that, though.

Tommy holds out a hand. Techno gives a small pile of chocolate chips without question.

“Hey, question.” Technoblade says to Tommy, the two of them watching as Wilbur rummages through the shelves above them.

“What?”

“Who’s Tubbo?” He asks, and Tommy nearly chokes on the chocolate chips.

“Yes, I would like to know that too! You mentioned a Tubbo back out in the hall, and then you fucking slid away before I got an answer-” Wilbur adds.

Coughing a bit, Tommy chews at the rest of the chocolate bits in his mouth, swallowing and thinking for a moment. “Uh, he’s my best friend, back in my town. We’ve been together since we were little.”

“Technoblade’s my best friend.” Wilbur leans back, grinning down at Tommy. Technoblade just scoffs.

“I’m your brother.” Techno throws a chocolate chip up at Wilbur, missing.

“Best friend.” Wilbur insists, grabbing a container of what looks like maybe crackers. He drops it down to Technoblade.

Tommy continues with his answer. “Yeah, me and Tubbo, we’ve been together our whole lives, almost every single day. He’s going to fucking *murder* me on the spot when I see him tomorrow.”

“We’ll host a nice funeral.” Technoblade tells Tommy, Tommy not at all liking that answer.

“Oh, so that’s who Phil’s invited.” Wilbur says, climbing down the ladder. “I heard a few rumors about someone getting invited up but I didn’t know it’d be your Tubbo.”

“Is he cool?” Technoblade asks, Tommy grinning.

“The coolest.”

“Nice.”

Phil hums quietly over his desk as he looks over another pile of papers, requests for confirmation on certain projects, updates on certain communities. They’re important, for sure, but Phil’s only really skimming him, and his mind is elsewhere.

There's a small stack of papers at the corner of his desk, something that isn’t exactly work related at all, but he reaches for it anyway. He’s been working for a good couple hours, anyway, and this is important too.

Failing at holding back a yawn, Phil reads over a file he had gotten from Tommy's orphanage, information over his date of birth, any particularly concerning incidents, any relatives.

No relatives, which Phil expected. There's a few incidents marked down that Phil also somewhat expected, each and every single one also including Tubbo being right by Tommy.

Tommy's caused a fair share of trouble, but it's nothing terribly bad, rather just the type of chaos he would expect from Technoblade and Wilbur.

Stole property from a business (it was a chair), got into several fights with some of the kids (only rarely though, and Phil wouldn't doubt for a moment that they were at least somewhat justified), broke a window not once, not twice, but three times by chucking several objects through it (Phil isn't sure if he wants to know the context behind that one).

Something that is unexpected is when Phil looks at Tommy's registered name.

"Huh." Phil says out loud, blinking down at the paper. Theseus. His name was written down on the basket he arrived in. No last name, of course, but his actual name seems to be Theseus. Phil wonders who gave the nickname Tommy.

Tommy suits the teen better anyway, maybe he's just not fond of a serious sounding name like that, but Phil feels like Technoblade would like the name.

Looking over the rest of the information, Phil pauses at something standing out, and he sits up in his chair. Written down in a little box by Tommy's birthday (and Phil reminds himself to plan something for that) is a few extra vague details.

'Suspected hybrid, maybe of avian type? Tattoo of wings on his back, which has grown over the years, but no physical wings. Since there is virtually no information on a possible avian hybrid, it's not known how development is supposed to go, but as of currently, no other physical traits to be noted.'

Phil thinks he's stopped breathing.

He has to put the paper down before he crumples it in his grip, and he leans back in his seat, blinking slowly at the paper on his desk.

How.

How can Phil be this *lucky*?

What are the chances, the actual chances, of him meeting Tommy, who's endearing enough on his own, but also possibly the first ever, besides Phil, to have *wings* ?

Phil has to clear his throat, leaning his head down on the desk with a deep breath.

Hell, what are the *chances* ?

He considers over asking Tommy about this, trying to bring it up, but it's too early for that, and Tommy still oughta settle in. He could wait until Tommy brings it up himself.

Deciding on that, and trying to ignore the way his heart is pounding in his chest, Phil raises his head, calling for the guard that's placed beside the door of his office.

He realizes it's gotten rather late. It's past midnight, now.

"Your Grace?" The guard answers, and Phil goes to try and somewhat organize the mess of papers on his desk.

“Send someone down into the town where Tommy was picked up and spread the rumor that Tommy got back home from the castle late at night.” Phil says, piling papers up into a stack. If Tommy is to stay here, he’s going to become the next big news topic on newspapers for the next week, at least. If Phil’s going to simmer that down, it’d be good to send the idea that Tommy never stayed at all.

After he’s asked Tommy about staying for good, and all the official documents are put through, *then* he can announce that he’s taken in a new son.

After that, the newspapers are free to go wild.

The guard walks off with the new order, and Phil yawns again, taking the paper with Tommy’s info again and reading over that small bit next to his name.

Wings.

Phil is the luckiest father in the empire.

“So I told him, ‘no, that’s a shit deal, you’re trying to rob me of my money’ and well, he didn’t respond well to that.” Tommy rambles, popping a chocolate chip in his mouth as he continues to tell a story about how a shop owner once tried to scam him.

Techno and Wilbur listen attentively, the three of them walking down the halls back to their rooms, not in any big rush.

“I would imagine.” Technoblade deadpans, Tommy scoffing.

“Oh, yeah, he was pissed, his face got all red and ugly, and that’s what I told him, I said ‘your face is getting all red and ugly’ and he didn’t like that one all that much either, I think.”

Wilbur snorts.

“Did you get kicked out of the store?” Technoblade asks, eating a chocolate chip.

“Actually, I think he was just going to fight me, me! A child! I would have kicked his ass, although I would also laugh if he got arrested for assaulting me. But yeah, he was leaning over the counter, being all angry and shit, and then Tubbo grabs me by the back of my shirt and practically drags me out of the store, all the way out to the street.”

“I think I like Tubbo.” Wilbur comments, Technoblade huffing.

“So I go ‘Tubbo what the fuck! What about the bread we were going to buy?!’ and then I find out that he fucking shoved it into his shirt and stole it, actually.”

“I like Tubbo.” Wilbur announces, Tommy holding back a laugh. “I think me and him will be good friends.”

“No, he’s my friend, fuck off.”

“I can be his next friend, since you’re dying tomorrow.” Wilbur points out, Tommy nodding regretfully. Last night of living, tonight, his death will be swift at the hands of an angry Tubbo.

“I’ll still haunt you, I’ll be his- his ghost best friend, and you’re going to be a boring alive friend.” Tommy says, Wilbur rolling his eyes.

“Ghosts *are* cooler than alive people.” Technoblade adds in, Tommy nodding his head intensely.

“Pfft, okay, sure-” Wilbur goes to start his defense, but he’s cut off by another voice.

“What are you boys doing up?” Phil asks, all three of them freezing, turning around to see Phil behind him, smiling fondly with his arms crossed. His eyes flick to Tommy, and to the food held in their hands. “And why is Tommy out of bed?” He looks to their feet. “And where are your...shoes?”

“Oh. Well, Dad, you see-” Wilbur goes to answer, then grabs Tommy by the hand and goes into a sprint. “RUN!”

“Oy-!” Phil goes to follow, the three of them frantically running down the hall to the living quarters, which aren’t that far, only a few turns away.

“Oh, fuck, wait-” Tommy laughs, stumbling in his steps as he’s practically dragged along by Wilbur, Techno grabbing his other hand and continuing to run right beside him.

“It is way too late to be *running* at this time.” Techno complains, and Wilbur tells him to suck it up.

They’re caught before they can make it to their rooms, and Tommy sits against the wall by their rooms, a box of chocolate chips in his hands as Phil lightly scolds both Wilbur and Technoblade for their nightly shenanigans.

“And *why* did you drag Tommy out of bed?” Phil asks, not being able to keep off the smile on his face at the thought of the three of them getting along.

“What if he dragged *us* out of bed?” Technoblade suggests. Tommy throws a chocolate chip, aiming for Techno’s head. It hits his shoulder instead. “Hey!”

Phil laughs, Wilbur giving his own input. “We just thought a snack would be nice.”

“At midnight?”

“No better time.”

“There are so many other times you could’ve picked- why do you two always sneak off to the kitchens past midnight? Yes, I’ve noticed.” Technoblade and Wilbur both look at the floor like it’s the most interesting thing in the world. Tommy snorts.

Phil sighs with a smile, shaking his head. “Go to sleep, both of you.” He asks, and he presses a kiss to their foreheads, pushing them off to their rooms.

“Fine, fine.”

“Night.”

Tommy gets up so he can go to sleep too, and he lets Technoblade steal the box of chocolate chips as he passes, not wanting to take that with him to his room. Phil stops him before he can go down the hall, though.

“Tommy, hold on.”

“Huh?” Tommy pauses, Phil waving a hand to follow as he walks over to his own room.

“I wanted to give you something.” Phil says, motioning for Tommy to wait, before going into his bedroom, Tommy having to stand out in the hall for a moment, waiting.

Phil comes out with something folded neatly in his hands, a light blue fabric.

“Here. I thought you’d like it as a gift.” Phil says, Tommy carefully taking it from Phil’s hand and unfolding it, realizing he’s been handed a cape.

A really soft, fancy cape. It fades into white at the ends, reminding him of the snow outside, and Tommy blinks, lagging mentally for a minute as he tries to process what is in his hands.

Wait. “Gift?” Tommy repeats, blinking again, running his thumbs over the fabric.

“Yeah. It’s nice, isn’t it?”

“It’s-” Tommy stammers, shaking his head. “Well, it’s fucking cool, but I can’t have this.”

“Sure you can. You’re holding it, I gave it to you, now it’s yours.” Phil shrugs, Tommy sputtering.

“But, this is-” Tommy laughs, Phil grinning. “Why?”

Phil shrugs. “Why not? I thought you’d like it.”

Tommy stares, words lost from him, and Phil just pushes him gently to go down the hall. “Now go to sleep. It’s late.”

“Thank you. Really.” Tommy is able to get out, taking a few steps back. “And, uhm. Goodnight!”

“Night.” Phil answers, and watches Tommy run off with a fond smile, the door closing behind him.

Chapter End Notes

Tommy have wings!!! Tommywingit go brrr

yup yup, there you go, sorta plot twist number one! Yall are gonna freak at what I have planned tho >:)

Man, I can't wait. Anyway, thanks for reading. I'm going to sleep now

Clingy reunion, and a smack in the face

Chapter Notes

hehehe 7k chapter go BRRRR

man what a day. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“So, what are the chances that you calm down and go to sleep-” Ranboo ducks as a plate gets thrown his way, banging off the wall and hitting the floor with a clatter. “Okay, so, zero.”

“What the fuck!” Tubbo screams, pacing back and forth through the kitchen, waving around an unfolded letter in his hands. The envelope was ripped open a while ago, right after Tubbo slammed the door in Eret’s face and stomped off to read the invitation in the peace and quiet of the kitchen.

Niki had opened the door again to apologize, choosing to instead make nice conversation with the man while Tubbo raised hellfire by the ovens.

Ranboo made the less smart decision, and went to go check out how *that* was going.

“One day! He leaves for ONE. DAY. And he gets in contact with the EMPEROR!?” Tubbo kicks at the ovens, a metal clang ringing out. Ranboo feels like that should’ve hurt his foot, but Tubbo continues to walk as if nothing has happened, even with the newly added dent in the side of the oven. “Oh, I’m going to have to fucking- attach a *leash* to back of his shirt after this- I’m never letting him out of my sight! Never again! Last time was bad, sure, but how the fuck did he get TO THE CASTLE!?”

“What happened last time?” Ranboo asks, Tubbo pausing in his pacing for just a moment.

“Last time he went out of my sight without informing me, he fought a racoon.” Tubbo says calmly, holding up the blank stare towards Ranboo for a moment.

Ranboo looks away. “Well. At least he didn’t fight anyone this time? I mean, do you really think he fought the Emperor?”

“I think,” Tubbo lifts his chin up high, then holds the letter out in front of him, skimming over the words again. “-that he’s fucking DEAD-”

“That’s drastic-”

“What does it even MEAN that the emperor is ‘fond of his company-’ Here, here-” Tubbo shoves the paper towards Ranboo, Ranboo stumbling to hold onto it properly. “Read it, read it. Maybe it’ll make more sense in your very calm, soothing voice.”

Ranboo laughs nervously, Tubbo staring up at him with a seething anger in his gaze. “I mean, I think it’ll sound the same-”

“Read it.”

“Ohh-kay-” Ranboo clears his throat, holding the paper closer to his face. *“To the residents who live in the bakery by the central plaza near Tommy’s home, specifically Tubbo, who’s he’s mentioned a lot, I’d like to invite you up to the castle tomorrow evening. Tommy is a long way from home, and he’s had a hectic day, so he’s been here at the castle in the meantime. Not to worry though, I’m fond of his company, and with what little I’ve seen of his habits, I can assume that you would be worried as to where he’s been for the past 24 hours or so. Well, he’s at the castle. It’s a long story. Come by tomorrow and I’m sure we can talk about it over some tea.”*

“From, Phil.” Tubbo finishes off for him, clasping his hands together and pressing them to his face, eyes burning a hole through the ground. “Emperor of the Antarctic Empire.”

“Huh, didn’t know his name was Phil.” Ranboo mutters, skimming over the letter again. It’s short, it’s simple, it’s handwritten neatly on light blue paper, and Ranboo tries to smooth out the crinkles Tubbo’s left on it from holding it so tightly. “He seems nice.”

“I’m going to kill him! I’m going to kill him.” Tubbo turns around, letting out a scream, then crumbling to the floor with a groan.

“The Emperor?!”

“No, Tommy.” Tubbo corrects, turning his face, his cheek smushed against the cool tile. “The emperor would be too hard to kill, anyway.” He mumbles under his breath.

“Hey!” Niki calls from the door, still in a pleasant conversation with Eret. “Don’t die over there!”

“I will die where I please!” Tubbo snaps back, rolling over onto his back. “I can’t believe him. I can’t believe this- we have talked about going to the Emperor before, and good for him that he met him! Bad for him, when I get my hands on him for meeting him WITHOUT TELLING ME!”

Ranboo sighs good-naturedly, crawling down on the floor to sit beside Tubbo. He folds the letter in his hands back up, creasing the edges neatly with his fingers. “You guys have talked about going to the emperor?”

“Yeah, for his...” Tubbo trails off, an arm thrown over his eyes, and he stops, going still. “....thing.”

“...what thing?”

Tubbo frowns, sitting up abruptly. “The thing, Ranboo. Of course!”

“Oh. Right. The thing!” Ranboo nods, then slowly ends up shaking his head. “...I don’t know what the thing is.”

“Oh my god, he must’ve told him!” Tubbo yells, slapping his hands onto Ranboo’s face, holding him in a death grip. “I mean, what other reason would Tommy be up at the castle?!”

“Uh-” Ranboo lags, hunching over at an awkward angle with Tubbo holding onto his face.

“Don’t answer that, actually.” Tubbo stumbles to his feet. “We got to make a cake! Two cakes.” He holds up two fingers in front of him, tugs at his shirt with the other hand, trying to think properly. “Hm.”

Tubbo knows Tommy, and he knows that the wings on his back have gotten no result, no matter what they do. The emperor is the only other person they’ve ever heard of about getting wings, and really, going up to him was just never an option, purely because of status. Who would believe two orphan kids when they come up and say, ‘hey, so he has wings, and we’ve got no clue how to make them- uh, appear?’

Surely Tommy’s found a way, somehow, to tell Phil, right? That seems like the obvious reason he’s at the castle right now, but then again, Tubbo still doesn’t want to accidentally spill anything that doesn’t need to be spilled. Tubbo’s kept that secret with him all his life. Tommy’s made him promise to never tell it to anyone, unless he said to.

“Why are we making cakes?” Ranboo asks.

Tubbo spins around, nodding. He will just dance around the topic when they get to the castle. Unless the Emperor says it outright, then he will act none the wiser. Besides, that’s hardly the most important thing on Tubbo’s mind right now.

Tommy’s imminent death is.

“Because we can’t just go to the castle with nothing! One cake for Tommy, and one cake for the Emperor, for putting up with Tommy. We’re poisoning Tommy’s cake.” Tubbo kneels down at Ranboo's level where he’s still sitting on the floor. “Do you know how to poison a cake?”

“I’m not going to answer that...?” Ranboo trails off, Tubbo making an annoyed sound and pushing him away by the face.

“Niki! Do we have hot sauce!?” Tubbo yells, running out of the kitchen and jumping over the counter. Ranboo watches him go with a quiet hope that Tommy’s death will be quick.

“Do we have what?!” Niki squawks, turning around as Tubbo stumbles over to the front door.

“Hot sauce.” Tubbo’s feet skid on the floor as he comes to a stop by the doorway. “You, Eret-nice glasses.”

“Thanks.” Eret grins, tilting his head the slightest bit in confusion at Tubbo's previous statement.

“I need hot sauce.” Tubbo turns to Niki again, making a sad pout as if he’s being so terribly inconvenienced by this lack of hot sauce. “Pleeease.”

“Why do you need hot sauce?” Eret asks, before Niki can point out that they don’t have hot sauce and that Tubbo probably shouldn’t have his hands on any.

“I’m going to poison someone tomorrow, and the death will be glorious and just.” Tubbo answers, rolling up his sleeves with a grin. He turns back around to walk towards the kitchen. “Ranboo! Turn on the oven!”

Tommy wakes up slowly.

Which is weird right off the bat, because he usually wakes up to a knock at his and Tubbo's door, or sleeps right through the knock and wakes up to Tubbo slamming a pillow over his head telling him to rise from the dead already.

The bed is soft, ridiculously soft, and he blames it on being half-asleep, turning over and burying his face into a comfy pillow with a sigh. Maybe the caretakers let them sleep in today. It'll mean him and Tubbo have to miss breakfast, but overall, it's not much of a loss, that one.

Tommy can faintly hear the sound of wind up against his window, and he wonders where the creaking noise that always comes with has gone. The window in his and Tubbo's room always creaked and groaned whenever the weather was something other than sunny, and right now, it doesn't make any noise at all. It throws him off with the peaceful silence, because he's used to that background noise so much, and shouldn't it be all creaky and shit with the wind?

Tommy carefully stretches an arm out in front of him, yawning with his eyes still tightly shut. He waits for his hand to hit the wall that his bed is usually up against, and he folds out his arm, stretching, stretching, and-

Wait.

Tommy's entire arm is stretched out across the mattress, and he knows his bed is not big enough to do that. He blindly searches around for his wall, the wall of his room that always smells like dust, weird, but homey, and he only finds more bed.

He takes a deep breath in. Where's the dusty smell?

Opening his eyes, Tommy squints blearily over his pillow to see sunlight shining across the room, the room-

Tommy freezes.

This isn't his room.

He sits up with a jolt, shaking his head and blinking hard to get the sleep off of him, and he looks around to see that it's the same room from yesterday, big and spacious, a fancy rug on the ground, a shiny mirror to the side, the doors to a *balcony*-

This isn't his room.

Oh fuck, yesterday wasn't a dream.

Tommy blinks, once, twice, then scrambles to get out of bed, struggling with the blankets and falling out of bed instead, crumpling onto the ground in a heap of limbs and tangled blankets.

"Oh, fucking-" Tommy mutters, kicking his legs to crawl out of the grasps of his evil, but very soft and comfy, blankets. He stumbles to his feet, stepping off the blue rug that's around his bed to the cool tile that's put down around the rest of the room.

It's a bit cold, a slight chill in the air, and Tommy looks over to the fireplace across the bed (fireplace! A fireplace in his room!) and notices that it's long since been out.

He's in the castle.

Holy shit, Tommy has just woken up in the castle, and turns out last night wasn't a dream or a hallucination, the emperor actually gave him a room to sleep in for the night, even with all the shit he pulled yesterday.

Tommy winces. Oh, he did not make a good impression yesterday. What are the chances guards throw him out within the next ten minutes or so, now that he's awake?

He scans the room again, biting at the inside of his cheek as he feels anticipation and excitement thrumming through his veins.

Might as well make the most of being here. Time to snoop around, he thinks.

There's a nightstand beside the bed, and Tommy goes after that first, looking through the drawers and finding nothing. There's the book that Techno and Wilbur gave him sitting on top of it though, right beside a lamp, and Tommy picks it up carefully, flipping it open to the first few pages.

The nether, oh, so cool. He wishes he could go there, the things he could see. Him and Tubbo love having their discussions about the mobs that roam around untamed lands, but in Tommy's opinion, the things in the nether have to be just the coolest. If the dragon were still alive, that would be on the top of his list, but it's been dead since before Tommy was born, so. Big bummer, that.

He crawls back onto the bed, reading through the pages for a little while, murmuring words under his breath as he reads through the basic information of the nether, of the things explorers have found out, have seen.

Technoblade and Wilbur have been to the nether, Tommy thinks, grinning a little as he tries to imagine that. From what little he's seen, they bicker so much, and he faintly wonders if they are actually immune to lava, or if he's just remembering wrong from last night.

Remembering that he's meant to be poking around the room while he still has it, Tommy puts the book down to the side, rolling off the mattress to search around some more. The fireplace hasn't got anything, just burnt out wood. The mantel of the fireplace doesn't hold anything, and it looks kinda barren, with nothing on it. After a moment, Tommy goes and grabs the book about the nether, and he puts it on the shelf. It doesn't do much, but it looks kinda better.

There's a big dresser beside the fireplace, made of dark wood that's cool to the touch when Tommy presses his fingertips to it, and when he looks through the drawers, he finds nothing there too.

He looks under the bed, finds nothing, looks onto the balcony for a quick second, finds nothing, except for a cold gush of air that sends goosebumps down his shirt. There's a door that lead to a small bathroom, and Tommy marvels at the fact there's a fucking bathroom right here, then marvels at how shiny the counters are.

Taking a moment to fix his hair, because it has been a mess from waking up, he leaves the bathroom, closing the door behind him, and turning his eyes onto the only thing left in the room.

Closet.

This one has a sliding door made of wood, which means it leaves Tommy in suspense until he's able to pull it open, showing a small room that's a bit dim and empty. There's a bunch of drawers and places for clothes to hang, but nothing actually hanging.

Well, except for one set of clean, blue clothes innocently placed on the top of a little table at the middle of the room.

Tommy eyes it with suspicion, then goes to pick it up, finding that it's just a clean button up shirt. There's new pants to go along with it, and under it, the cape Phil had given him.

Was this put here for him? Tommy's a bit concerned that he didn't wake up when someone came into his room, or, the room, the room isn't his-

He shakes his head. It would be weird to walk around with the same clothes from yesterday, wouldn't it? And these were put here for a reason, probably, for him. There's nothing else in the room, anyway, it'd be weird for these not to be for him.

The room is empty, strangely so, like it's been waiting for the person who lives here to come back from a long trip. There should be belongings in here, some sort of mark that shows that the room gets used, but it's strangely empty, and clean. It feels lonely, almost, and that single book up on the fireplace mantel helps a little, at least.

You would think they would make a guest room a bit more inviting.

Tommy huffs, changing into new clothes, and immediately noticing how soft they are compared to his usual ones. It's almost uncomfortable, to be honest. He's used to the stretched out, worn fabric of his usual shirts, not this.

But he doesn't have room to complain, especially when he's in the fucking castle! If things go well, Tommy hopes to be able to see more around here, before he inevitably is given the boot.

Speaking of boots. Or shoes, really. Where are his shoes?

He's got no shoes, only socks, and he cannot for the life of him remember where they've gone. He remembers kicking them off before going to sleep, then getting rudely woken up by the princes barging into the room like they own the place.

Well, they do own the place. But this is Tommy's room. For now, at the moment. So, while he's here, he oughta have some jurisdiction over it.

As much as he searches high and low, there's no shoes to be found, and Tommy gives up on the search, grumbling under his breath as he pulls the cape over his shoulders.

Oh. It's soft.

Tommy grins, waving the cape around, hopping in place for a moment. Look at him, look at him now! He's got a cape from the emperor *himself*. He's the luckiest person ever. Tubbo is going to be so jealous after he murders him.

With nothing left to do, and Tommy deeming himself acceptable enough to exist around royalty, he goes for the door, creaking it open just a crack, and peering outside into the

hallway.

He doesn't hear anything, it seems empty.

He opens it more, and slips out, closing it gently behind him. The tile of the hallway is cold under his socks, and he feels unhappy with the loss of his shoes, and also feels a bit tempted to try sliding across the hallway again, just to feel something. Something like adrenaline. And getting in trouble.

Maybe not the smartest idea, considering where he is, but hey, look at his track record, and at the very least you won't be surprised.

"Hey!" Someone yells, and Tommy turns his head to find two guards at the end of the hall pointing towards him, one of them walking over. The other walks off.

Here's the moment, he's getting kicked out. Right after he woke up too, damn.

"Uh-" Tommy holds his hands up, stepping back.

"His majesty in his office right now." The guard says, waving up a hand and throwing Tommy very off guard. "Shall I escort you to breakfast? He said he would meet you there after you woke up."

Tommy blinks. Squints a little, wonders if he's still asleep.

"What." He gives as a response.

The guard tilts their head. "The emperor wanted to meet up with you at breakfast when you woke up. Do you want to go now, or should I send word that you're going back to sleep?"

“No, no-” Tommy waves his arms, laughing a little. “Uhm, I could go for breakfast.” He shrugs.

“Follow me, then.”

Tommy follows along, getting whisked off through the halls over to the dining room that he had been in before. It’s clean from the mess that happened yesterday, and there’s a few plates placed at the end of the table. Not nearly as much food as yesterday, but still rather a lot for just breakfast.

“You can go and sit down. His majesty should be here shortly, and we’ll be just outside the room.” The guard says, Tommy walking in hesitantly, glancing back at the guard with a nervous smile.

“Ah- Thanks.” He grins, and he gets a smile in return, and the door closing slowly behind him.

Well. This is awkward.

He makes his way over to the end of the table, choosing to sit at the chair that’s to the side, rather than the one that’s at the very edge, a bit bigger than all the other chairs.

Why’s he here again? Breakfast? Sounds nice, he won’t pass that offer up, especially if the food is as good as yesterday, but also he is a bit confused as to why Phil is supposed to come eat with him. Surely he would’ve eaten already, before doing emperor things.

Tommy picks at his eggs, frowning a bit as he realizes that Phil really is the emperor. How the hell did he have the time to hang out with Tommy all day yesterday? The man should have an insane schedule, with the size of the empire.

He wonders where Wilbur and Techno are for a second, and then he wonders if he’s going to be able to say goodbye to them before he’s sent off. They are royalty, even if they’re

annoying. Tommy thinks the fact that they've even gone to the nether is cool, and personally, he wouldn't mind having one more conversation with the two of them before going back to his familiar town.

There's a small knock at the door, and Tommy raises his head to see it pushed open, Phil walking in, his head looking behind him as he finishes up saying something to the guard.

"-don't let him hear you say that, mate." He grins, walking past the door and grinning wide when he sees Tommy. "Tommy, good morning." The door shuts quietly behind him.

"Hello." Tommy gives as a greeting, still chewing on his food. He clears his throat to try again. "Morning."

"Did you sleep well? With Techno and Wilbur waking you up so late, I wasn't sure..." Phil walks past behind Tommy's seat, and Tommy twists around in his chair to keep a steady gaze the whole way.

Phil's dressed up way too nicely to be having breakfast with Tommy right now. He's dressed up in nice dark blues, a silver crown resting on his head, and even his wings seem to shine in a way that just shows how important he is. Tommy shrinks a little in his seat. Oh, Phil's so cool.

"I slept fine." Tommy answers, Phil sitting down and scooting up in his seat to eat his own food. "I was just thrown off by the room, to be honest, I thought I was still back in my own room, but my bed is not that big."

"You have a tiny room?" Phil asks, taking a bite of his food.

"No, it's not tiny, it's just not fucking huge like the one I woke up in."

Phil snorts. "You'll get used to it."

Tommy shakes his head. Even if he got to stay here for a whole week, that room is still a jarring change from what he's used to. "I don't think I ever could, that room has a balcony. A balcony, Phil! And a big closet, although it's empty as hell."

"I did give at least some clothes." Phil points with his fork at Tommy's shirt. "And I'll send some more later. I was hoping you could pick them out yourself, so you wouldn't be upset with anything you didn't like."

"Oh, no no-" Tommy drops his fork, leaning over the table. "You already got enough, Phil, I mean, this cape is awesome, that's good enough for me to bring back." Also, Tommy can't imagine what the caretakers would think if he came back with a fuckton of gifts from the emperor. They'd probably think he got blackmail on him, or something. "Oh, but can I keep this book I got?"

Phil blinks at Tommy for a moment, smiling strangely, then seeming to finally process Tommy's question. "What book?"

"Technoblade and Wilbur gave me this book, about the nether and stuff. It's way more than anything I've ever seen in a store or library, so could I take that back with me too? When I get back to the home."

Phil snickers, holding a hand to his mouth. Tommy wonders if he's said something wrong.

"Or not, I mean, it's just a book-" He backtracks.

"No, no, mate, don't worry. It's yours. If they gifted it to you, then it's yours to keep. Where do you have it?"

Tommy's heart soars. Fuck yes, he's keeping a book about the nether. Tubbo's going to freak.

“I put it over the fireplace thing. On the shelf.” Tommy nods.

“Alright. I’m pretty sure they gave you the first one, which is just basic information. That’s part of a series though, so I’ll have the rest of the books put in your room-”

“Wha-” Tommy sputters, trying to decline. “No, one book is fine, I mean, it’ll get heavy to carry, won’t it-”

“Hm, nope.” Phil grins. “Don’t worry about it, mate. Besides, it’d be nicer to have a bunch of books on the shelf than just one, right?”

Tommy nods, mouth clicking shut. He’s not going to argue. Maybe Phil will just have a bunch of people carry his stuff back home. God, that sounds kinda embarrassing, but Tommy is not going to turn down a gift like that. Even if it means he’ll be the talk of the town for a bit.

“Thanks, Phil.” Tommy smiles, trying to push all the appreciation he can through one smile. Maybe it’s not much to Phil, now that Tommy thinks about it. The guy is rich, isn’t he? He probably thinks giving a bunch of books to Tommy is just a few coins, compared to his wealth. Well, that explains it.

Phil hums, and they eat in silence for a few minutes, before Tommy’s bringing up another question.

“Hey, where’s Wilbur and Technoblade?” Tommy asks, pushing the food around with his fork absent-mindedly.

“Hm, I think Techno was testing out weapons in the courtyard, and Wilbur’s either watching him wipe the floor with the poor guards, or is sparring against him.” Phil tells.

“Shouldn’t they be here?” Tommy asks.

“You want them to be here? I mean, I doubt they’d mind-”

“No, not-” Tommy waves a hand. “I mean, aren’t you supposed to eat breakfast with them?”

“Ah, no, I didn’t eat breakfast this morning. I wanted to wait for you, but I thought you should sleep in, considering, well.” Phil shrugs. “Everything.” And that’s one way to sum it all up.

Tommy struggles to push words out of his throat. “Oh.” He croaks out, laughing a little. “Cool.”

Phil smiles. “Yup, and- by the way, I also wanted to have a talk with you later today, after Tubbo’s gotten here.”

“Tubbo!” Tommy slams his hands down on the table, sitting up straight. “Holy shit, I forgot he was coming over here!” He grins wide, even with his next words. “I’m going to be so dead!”

Phil breaks out in a laugh, leaning over and wheezing.

“What do you mean *dead*-”

“Nevermind that, nevermind, we are going to gloss over it.” Tommy laughs nervously, pushing his plate forward. “So wait, talk? What did you want to talk about?”

“Personally, I want to wait till the paperwork is in order. Then I’ll tell you. Then you can think about it.” Phil shrugs, being vague on purpose.

“What?” Tommy makes a face, confused.

“After Tubbo.” Phil insists. “Are you excited to see him?”

Tommy still feels a bit suspicious at Phil dancing around a Talk, and he’s concerned that it’s not going to go well, but Phil’s face shows no chance at him giving a hint, so Tommy lets the subject move on, taking the warning that he’s given. Hopefully it’s not a bad talk.

“Yeah. I miss him. Even if it’s been a day. It’s felt like a week.”

“Aw, I get that.” Phil leans back in his seat. “Sometimes everything gets so hectic that it’s surprising it’s only been 24 hours.”

“You’re always busy, aren’t you?”

“A lot of the time.” Phil shrugs. “But I can make time for important things, and at the end of the day, my word goes. If I rather not have a meeting and instead go build at a new project, then I’ll do so.” Phil hums, thinking of a certain old friend he hasn’t visited in a long while. “Hey, is there anything you want to do before Tubbo gets here? He shouldn’t be due for another hour or so.”

“Hmmm.” Tommy thinks, leaning his elbows onto the table. An idea pops up in his head, and a smile breaks out across his face.

“Ohhhoho, fuck yes.” Tommy grins, holding an actual *sword*.

“Don’t swing it wildly.” Techno advises, reaching up from behind him and adjusting his hands, letting go. “I swear, if you stab someone. Well, you can stab Wilbur-”

“Fuck you-” Wilbur flips him off from where he’s sitting to the side with Phil.

“Then that’s cool.” Techno huffs, stepping back again as Tommy smiles wide, beaming with holding an actual metal sword in his hands. It’s kinda heavy, but not so heavy to where he can’t hold it, just heavy in the way where it’s obvious it can do some serious damage.

It’s also just so *cool-looking*, the hilt being a deep blue with something that Tommy dares to say could be a diamond sitting in the center. The actual blade is silver, shiny and new, and Tommy raises it up, swings it through the air, and breaks out into another excited laugh.

“Have you ever thought about learning how to swordfight, mate?” Phil asks from where he’s sitting to the side, on a ledge of stone.

“I don’t know.” Tommy answers, not really paying attention, since all his current attention is on this cool fucking sword. “I’ve never had a sword at all, I’d be shit.”

“You’d probably be better than Wilbur, at least-” Techno jabs, smiling directly towards Wil.

Wilbur smiles back, but it’s very pointed and passive-aggressive. “Okay, you have been bullying me this entire morning, fuck you, I trip you once during a fight and you’re bitter-”

“-I didn’t trip, I fell, I lost my footing-”

“Sure, sure, you did!”

Phil huffs, wrapping a wing around Wilbur. “You can keep that sword if you want, Tommy.” He says to the teen, who whips his head over to Phil with wide eyes.

“Really?!” Tommy lowers the sword, completely forgetting the fact Phil’s already given him a bunch of things at this point, and it really was going to get tedious to bring it back to the orphanage.

“If you want it.” Phil nods. “But you’re not going to use it right away, just saying.”

Tommy frowns.

“Training!” Wilbur chimes. “You can hang it up in your room until you know how to properly hold a sword, how about that?”

Tommy shrugs, holding the sword up to look at it closer with a smile. It would look a bit strange in his room back at the orphanage, and he’s not sure where he’s going to get lessons, but a sword hanging up on his wall? Now that’s something he’s never going to pass up.

“Sure.” He agrees. “Man, Tubbo’s going to love this.”

“Speaking of.” Phil gets up to his feet, Wilbur getting up with him. “Come on, let’s go meet him at the front of the castle. We’ve been here a while.” That’s true, it took a bit for them to walk here, and then for Techno to actually pick out a sword for Tommy to hold. Tommy had just wanted to check out the swords. Now he *owns* one.

“Here, give that over.” Techno raises a hand out, Tommy handing it to him with a bit of a pout. “I’ll send it to your room right now.”

“Come along, Tommy.” Phil calls, and Tommy runs a little past Techno, stepping in pace beside Phil, and feeling warm when a wing rests over his shoulders.

It’s cold, as they stand outside in the front of the castle, behind the main gates. It reminds Tommy of him first getting here yesterday. He looked like a mess, if he’s being honest, but look at him now, cool cape, new clothes, standing next to Phil and the princes like it’s no big deal.

Oh, this is amazing.

There's no snow today, but the sky is dim with clouds, and the usual chill stays in the air, a signature sign of the Empire. It's never warm here, and Tommy gets a stray thought of how he would deal in the nether if he's been in the cold of the empire all his life.

There's a carriage that comes their way, and it stops a good ten feet away, guards quickly moving around as the front gates shut again, and the horses pulling the carriage are settled down.

Tommy takes a sharp breath in, filling his lungs with the cold as the door gets opened.

He takes off running the second Tubbo's one step out of the carriage, looking around with wide eyes, an awed expression. He's holding a container in one of his arms, and there's a warm scarf wrapped around neck.

The second he sees Tommy, he stumbles the rest of the way getting down, and sprints too, grinning wide.

"Tommy!" Tubbo yells, sounding relieved.

"Tubbo!"

Tommy expects for them to meet in the middle and stop for a hug, but Tubbo just keeps going, and Tommy gets tackled back with a scream, hitting the snow on the ground. He can hear Wilbur laughing.

"You FUCKER-" Tubbo yells, and at first he was just getting tackle-hugged, now Tubbo's trying to put him into a chokehold, and Tommy kicks and screams for his life.

“WAIT, WAIT-”

“Do you have ANY idea how worried I was-”

“I was mugged! You think I wanted to fucking just-” Tommy coughs, wacking his hands backwards to smack Tubbo in the face. There’s still an arm around his neck, but it’s lessened into more of a hug. “It’s a long story!” He chokes out.

“Oh, you were mugged?” Tubbo responds, his voice going calm way too fast to be comforting. “Good for you. I’ll forgive you on one account.” He lets go of Tommy, and reaches for the container he brought, the thing having fallen when they both fell onto the ground.

It holds two cupcakes, one with bright red frosting, and the other with a pretty light blue. Tubbo takes the red one, and holds the container up to Niki, who’s walked up behind them out of the carriage at this point. She takes it with a resigned look and walks over to Phil, Ranboo following at her heels with a mask over his face hiding his mix of curiosity and pity.

Tommy is none the wiser, and blinks down at the cupcake with a surprised face.

“Happy birthday.” Tubbo smiles, and while the cupcake is a trick, the message is sincere. “It’s kinda early, but, hey. Gotta pay you back somehow.”

Tommy smiles, huffing. “Thanks, Tubbo.” He takes the cupcake, the two of them getting back onto their feet. He takes a bite out of it, chewing for a moment.

Then immediately spits it out.

“What the FUCK-” Tommy sputters, shoving the cupcake back into Tubbo’s hands, sticking his tongue out. “Oh, god, why’s it *spicy*?!”

Phil watches Tommy grow increasingly more panicked and in pain as Tubbo seems to regret absolutely nothing.

“He made a bad cupcake as revenge.” Niki explains, Ranboo looking at the two princes and finding equally disturbed yet amused faces. “Nice to meet you, your Grace.”

“Call me Phil.” Phil greets, offering a hand and giving Niki a handshake, growing concerned as Tommy starts to yell.

“What the fuck is in that!?” Tommy tries to spit again, falling to his knees dramatically as he coughs. “My mouth is burning, what the hell?!”

“Revenge!” Tubbo screams, standing over Tommy. “How does that feel?!”

“NOT VERY GOOD, YOU FUCKING-”

“OH, I’M SORRY, I’M SUPPOSED TO BE ALL GLAD YOU DISAPPEARED FOR A WHOLE DAY-?”

Tommy screams again.

“Uh, there’s another one for you, uhm, your majesty.” Ranboo says, very much ignoring Tommy’s cries in the background. Niki holds up the container with the blue cupcake.

“It’s free from whatever Tubbo put in it, trust me.” Niki assures.

“Thank you.” Phil takes the container, still a bit concerned over how Tommy is face first into the snow. “Uh- but I think my guards are still going to check this for poison, though.”

“That’s understandable.” Niki smiles, as Tubbo forces Tommy to eat the rest of the cupcake. Tommy’s yelling again.

“Tea?” Phil suggests.

Tubbo thinks it’s been very successful so far.

Tommy ate his birthday cupcake, as he should, then he yelled about how ‘cupcakes should not feel like I’m eating lava’, all according to plan.

Now they’re having tea with the Emperor. Which, Tubbo thinks is absolutely awesome.

Although,

“Hey,” Tubbo leans in towards Tommy, who’s holding a cup of milk in his hands with a sour expression. “Where did the princes go?”

“Oh, Techno and Wil?” Tommy says distractedly, and Tubbo blinks at how easily he refers to them. “I dunno, they probably ran off after the great first impression you gave.”

“I think it was a good first impression.” Tubbo smiles, sipping at a cup of tea.

Him and Tommy are sitting at their own table, just across from Phil, Niki, and Ranboo. Ranboo looks far too nervous to say anything, but Niki seems alright. Phil is inviting as always, and he grins easy.

They had gotten led up to what seems like an indoor garden. They’re all sitting on a balcony of some sort, but if Tubbo looks off the ledge, he can see the beginning of a huge garden, with more green he’s ever seen in his life.

He wonders if there's flowers that are grown nearby.

"Phiiiil." Tommy calls, slumping back in his seat. Maybe he sounds whiny, but he doesn't care. He had the literal taste of hellfire in his mouth like fifteen minutes ago, he deserves to be whiny.

Phil raises his head, smiling warmly. "What, mate?"

"Where's Techno and Wil?"

There's a moment where Phil thinks on it, fiddling with the cup in his hands. "I think they said they were going back to training grounds. You want to take Tubbo and go visit them?"

"Nah." Tommy shrugs, looking at Tubbo with a 'there, now you know' expression. Tubbo just squints at him strangely, and his eyes fall onto the cape Tommy's wearing, then back to Phil. He takes another sip of his tea.

They sit in silence for a bit more, Niki and Phil talking, Tubbo and Tommy eventually going into a conversation as to what Tommy's day consisted of yesterday, and he's only a bit of the way through it when a guard comes knocking at the door.

"Your Grace?" They ask, Phil raising his head. "Sorry for interrupting, but you're needed at the moment."

"Can it wait?" Phil asks, a pointed look.

"No. You'll want to see this."

That catches Phil's attention, and he sighs, before getting up with a smile. "Hope you don't mind waiting here for a bit while I deal with that?"

"It's alright." Niki nods, and Ranboo gives a thumbs up.

"What's happened?" Tubbo asks, beating Tommy to the punch as Phil walks past. "Is something wrong?"

"Ah, no, just paperwork, probably." Phil assures, waving a hand. Tubbo and Tommy still look at him with worried faces, and Phil thinks of an idea. "Hey Tommy. Why don't you go show Tubbo your room? Your stuff should be in there."

"Oh!" Tommy stands up suddenly, slamming his hands on the table. "Tubbo, you're going to think it's so cool, I got a sword- come on-"

Tubbo gets up with Tommy, Tommy leading him by the hand out to the hallway.

"Let the guard take you to the living quarters!" Phil calls out, watching the poor guard chase after them. "Welp. Hope they don't get lost."

He turns to Niki and Ranboo. "I'll be back. I won't take long."

"Don't worry about it." Niki reassures. "Nice view, anyway." She waves to the greenery below.

Phil nods, and leaves, letting the guard that came to call for him show him the way.

He gets led far into the castle, and gets led towards the dungeon.

“There had been a problem with...the portal.” The guard confesses, Phil’s face shifting into something more serious.

“What?”

“Not the portal itself! The door, it- Well, come look.”

The walk is a bit long, and there’s quite a few winding stairs to go down, but Phil knows the path by heart at this point. He walks quickly, the guard having to nearly jog to keep up with him, and Phil’s mind races with worries, with things gone wrong.

They arrive soon enough, with four guards standing still beside the door. The door, which behind it, leads to the portal to the End.

“There’s been damage done to it.” Phil’s told, and he walks up to the giant entrance, scanning the marks.

Phil was careful about the portal. The walls around it are reinforced, made with obsidian. There’s guards who stay vigilant and stay at the only doorway at all times. And the door itself?

It’s entirely unbreakable. It’s enchanted to the nether and back, with only Phil being able to push it open if he wants. No one can get in, unless he permits it. He keeps the End locked up tight.

But there are marks on the door. Burn marks, scratches, and usually nothing makes any sort of mark on a door like this, except for magic.

He raises a hand to the door, feels it hum against him, and for a second, he imagines he can feel the hum of the portal too, hiding behind the door, whispering in his ears.

Someone tried to undo the enchantments made on this door.

Someone tried to get *in*.

Phil's wings ruffle behind him, and he holds back a deep frown, feeling a slight tinge of anger rise up. What reason would anybody have to want to get in?

Maybe the reason doesn't matter. Phil refuses to let this door be opened for someone with harmful intentions.

"When did this appear?" Phil asks, voice heavy, and all the guards stand dead still in his presence, not a single trace of a snake to be found.

"Last night, your Grace." Someone answers.

Phil breathes in deep, pressing his forehead to the metal of the door. It's cold, and it's always been cold, he's used to that now. What he's not used to is the sharp jagged chill in his chest, something he wants to call *fear*.

Phil breathes out.

"Interrogate every guard who was on patrol last night. Find whoever did this. Someone is trying to get in." He lifts his head, looking to the people around him. "Don't let them."

He gets jerky nods in response, and Phil nods back.

"We'll remain vigilant, your Grace."

“Thank you.” Phil says, truly meaning it. “Now, if you excuse me, I have guests at the moment.” And he walks away, trying to simmer away the feeling of fear that sits in his chest.

Tommy drags Tubbo over to his room, following the guard, chattering the entire time, Tubbo nearly tripping over his own feet with what Tommy’s telling him.

“How the fuck did you get into so much trouble in one *day* ?” Tubbo asks, baffled.

“I have no clue, man, but Phil! Holy shit, Phil is so cool-”

“He is, he is- the wings, Tommy, did-” Tubbo glances at the guard, grabs Tommy by the arm and leans in close. “Did you tell him about your wings?”

“...No.” Tommy responds.

“Dude!” Tubbo scoffs, looking offended at the fact Tommy hasn’t fessed up the thing that he shares with the emperor.

“It’s not the time!” Tommy groans, hitting his hands to his face. “It’s not like I’m going to be here much longer anyway, and he’s busy as shit. Maybe when I’m older, like we said.”

“Yeah, well you’re the one who went early.”

“On accident!” Tommy snaps, huffing. “Here we are!” He perks up at seeing the familiar hallway where his room is, and he grabs Tubbo by the hand running past the guard. “Thanks!” He shouts out, just to be polite.

“Your room is here?” Tubbo asks, glancing at the swords that hang up on the wall. “Woah.”

“I know, right? It’s fucking surreal, man, this is Phil’s room, this is Techno’s, that’s Wilbur’s-” Tommy points them out quickly, walking past without a second thought. Tubbo’s head snaps to the doors with an incredulous look, and then it shifts into something suspicious. “Here’s mine! I slept here for the night, and ohhh, it’s fucking insane, look-”

“This is your room?” Tubbo asks slowly, Tommy nodding as he pushes it open.

They both stand at the doorway, silent and staring for a moment.

“Woah.” Tubbo says again.

“Holy shit, he did get the books.” Tommy mutters, Tubbo looking at him with a perplexed face.

The room hasn’t been changed too much, except for a few key things. The bed has been made, nice and tucked in, now, the singular book over the fireplace has been joined with what looks like ten other books, all stacked in a neat row. The fireplace is burning, warm, keeping the chill out of the room. And there’s a sword hanging on his wall, just over the dresser beside the fireplace.

“Look- Tubbo, the sword!” Tommy runs forward, practically bouncing in excitement. “Look at this man, holy shit! I can’t use it yet, Wilbur said I probably need training before I get to even pick it up again, but oh my gosh-”

Tubbo’s wandered off to the closet, the door left open, and he gapes at the amount of fancy clothes hanging up. All prim and neat, all in mostly blue shades, fancy and probably really goddamn expensive.

“What the fuck?” Tubbo says, a laugh bubbling out of him. Tommy joins behind him at peering into the closet.

“What the fuck?” Tommy repeats, and it’s just as in awe. “This was empty this morning.”

“Was it?” Tubbo asks, feeling thrown off.

“Yeah...how the hell am I going to carry this back to town?” Tommy mutters, Tubbo turning away from the closet, and looking at the sword that hangs on Tommy’s wall.

“That sword is fucking cool.”

“I know right!?” Tommy grins, Tubbo laughing with him in the absolute bizarreness of the situation. “Do you think that’s a diamond in the middle?”

Tubbo looks at the sword a little more, and he tilts his head to the side, thinking. He glances at the books. The room, the clothes.

He stares at the cape over Tommy’s shoulders, Tommy distracted with reading the titles of the books over the fireplace, head tilted up and eyes narrowed in focus.

A realization dawns on Tubbo, and he realizes that Tommy is a fucking idiot.

“Man, there are ten books about the nether, that’s a fuckton of info-” Tommy mumbles.

“Tommy, why is the royal family trying to adopt you?” Tubbo asks, and Tommy freezes.

He snorts. Yeah, right. The thought is cool though. He wonders about getting a crown, just for fun.

He turns to Tubbo to scoff at the lame joke, and Tubbo's staring at him, unimpressed.

Tommy blinks.

"Haha, that was a joke, right?"

Tubbo squints at him.

"No." Tubbo's actually serious, he's looking at him with a look like Tommy is being an idiot and-

"... *what*."

Chapter End Notes

does a little dance woo! Tommy oblivious arc over! Time for the 'what do you mean the emperor is trying to be my dad' arc!

This was fun to write, I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed writing it. (mannn, 6 hours. thats how long it took to make this. phew. At least I took like two breaks!)

thanks so much for reading! :D

Overjoyed realizations

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tubbo's stare turns lethal. Usually it would be effective on Tommy, but he's too busy with the clearly ridiculous idea that Tubbo has brought up, has he gone insane-?

"Tommy-" Tubbo tilts his voice like he's about to lecture him, and Tommy waves his hands, cutting him off before he starts.

"Please tell me you're joking."

Because that's- no, no way. With everything that's happened so far, Tommy would have to start considering if he's *dead* or something, because if the royal family adopted him, it would be the cherry on top to all the bullshit that's happened for the past few days.

Phil's a nice guy, and Tommy already feels like he has a connection with him for the wings they must share, but he's also the literal emperor, and there's *no* way- It's not *possible* for the man to actually consider taking in Tommy.

That would make him a prince! Which sounds really fucking cool, but out of all the kids in the kingdom, Phil choosing *him* will make Tommy die on the spot.

Maybe he'll just die right here, actually. It'll save him the trouble of having to process if getting adopted is a literal possibility. Because with the way Tubbo is staring at him, it feels like Tommy is being quite stupid, and he doesn't appreciate that one bit.

"Okay, okay." Tubbo raises his palms towards Tommy, sighing under his breath. A small flicker of hope rises in Tommy's chest. Maybe it is a joke, a really bad one, that's giving Tommy a heart attack. "-are you just stupid, or are you in denial?"

“In denial of what?!” Tommy shrieks, Tubbo sputtering in response.

“Of the fact that the royal family is trying to take you in?!” Tubbo waves his hands around to gesture towards the room around them. “You have a literal room in their living quarters!”

“It’s a guest room!” Tommy justifies.

“Look me in the eyes- look at me in the eyes.” Tubbo points two fingers to his own face, staring down Tommy in a way that could probably send most people running for their lives. “You are saying, with your full chest, that the royal family gave you an actual guest room right next to their own rooms? Right next to them?”

Tommy holds his breath and feels like a fish that’s been yanked out of the water and thrown into outer space.

“A guest room, which, by the looks of it-” Tubbo spins around, pointing fingers to the objects around him. “-has your own collection of clothes for you, has your own personal sword hanging up on the wall-”

“Well-”

Tubbo points a deadly finger in his direction. Tommy shuts his mouth so quickly that his teeth click.

“And-” Tubbo continues, gesturing to the books over the fireplace. “Those books. Let me guess, they were a gift.”

“Techno and Wilbur gave me one book last night.” Tommy says slowly, in case Tubbo decides to snap at any moment, because the teen looks incredibly close to strangling Tommy to get his point across.

“Where did the rest come from?” Tubbo deadpans.

“...Phil.”

“Oh my god!” Tubbo slaps his hands to his face, groaning against his palms. “They’re trying to win you over!”

“No, no!” Tommy walks forward, making his way past the bed and grabbing Tubbo by the shoulders tightly. “They’re gifts! Because- I mean- they’re rich, aren’t they? This is like pocket change to them, it’s like-” Tommy says the last word like he’s eaten something rotten. “*Charity.*”

Tubbo bursts out laughing. “No, no, no, I know what I’m seeing-”

“You aren’t seeing shit-”

“Because Niki did it with me too.” Tubbo jabs a finger into Tommy’s chest, and Tommy feels like he’s going to have a heart attack again. Tubbo sounds so incredibly sure of himself, and Tommy wants to disagree, but he has limited information on how people try to win over kids for adoption, so he doesn’t have a base for an argument. He makes a quiet dying noise in his throat instead.

“No.” Tommy closes his eyes. If he doesn’t see Tubbo, then Tubbo can’t tell him that Phil is trying to adopt him, nope, no-

“Yup!” Tubbo chimes, and he tugs at the scarf around his neck. “Remember when I went with her to the plaza to hang out for the morning? She bought me a bunch of treats-”

“You’re being stupid, this is bullshit-”

“And this scarf, too, she gave me this scarf and told me to keep it, as a gift-”

“Okay, well, I didn’t get a scarf.” Tommy opens his eyes, Tubbo jabbing him in the shoulder to force him to actually look at him. “So, I’m not getting adopted.”

“No, you got a fucking sword.” Tubbo deadpans. “I think that’s just the rich-people equivalent.” He puts a hand on his chin, looking thoughtful.

Tommy decides to grace Tubbo’s words with a sliver of consideration, turning over the idea in his head. Well, he got gifts, but they weren’t to win him over or anything, right? The sword was just Phil being generous, he’s the Emperor, he’s known for being kind to his people.

Except, the books are a bit inconvenient as a gift, now that he thinks about it. It’s a whole series, and they’re placed on the shelf like that’s where they’re meant to be.

And the clothes too. They’re all put away in the closet, clearly meant for Tommy, but putting them in there just to have them all taken out when he goes back is tedious. Having all the stuff placed in the room like it’s meant to stay, it only makes sense-

If they were planning on *him* to stay.

“This can’t be happening.” Tommy breathes out, and he kneels down onto the ground, then just flops over onto the floor, groaning. “No, no, no-”

“He’s become self-aware.” Tubbo mutters. “Glad we got that out of the way. I have no clue how you got this far without even noticing, but we’re here now, I guess.”

“But Phil just invited me up because I saved his life!” Tommy rises from the ground suddenly, sitting up and looking at Tubbo with a baffled expression. “Wha- Why would- Me! Adopt me!”

The prospect is unbelievable, and Tommy feels stupid for considering it, because something like that sounds so out of reach, Tommy could never even dream of having it.

He knows he would probably get a family one day. Someone would come along, bring him into a home that could become his. He was more or less sure of that. He knew he was bound to get that one day.

But having the royal family be his own, that sounds like a fever dream. A really cool and unbelievable fever dream.

Because Tommy's just a random kid! He's just a kid in the village far away from the castle, who by a stroke of luck smashed a plate over some guy's head and ended up saving the actual ruler of the Antarctic Empire.

Of all kids, out of the entire empire, of all people, how could *royalty* see him, and decide that they want him?! Tommy will be the first to say any day that he's the best person ever, and frankly, he thinks his personality is quite charming at times, if not, all the time.

But not to the point to catch the attention of the royal family, holy shit.

Tubbo begins to laugh, bouncing up on toes and nodding frantically. "Holy shit, they're adopting you-" He pauses for a moment. "Actually, why you of all people-"

"Oh, fuck you." Tommy flops back onto the ground, laying on his back. "This is insane." He says quietly, staring up at the ceiling with wide eyes. "This is *not* happening."

When is he going to wake up? He's waking up any second now. Any moment now.

Tubbo leans over his head, blocking his sight of the ceiling. "I think it's happening."

“This is happening.” Tommy repeats, and he considers Tubbo’s words again, gathers up the evidence around him, the room for him, which is too close to the princes and the emperor to be a guest room, now that he’s thinking over it. The gifts, Phil waiting for him at breakfast, Techno and Wilbur dragging him out for late night snacks-

“This is happening!” Tubbo grins, voice giddy. “You’re getting adopted, Tommy, oh my gosh!”

“By the royal family.” Tommy blinks, and the words don’t feel real in his mouth. Tubbo moves to lay down beside Tommy, and they both lay there on the ground, staring up at the ceiling, as if they’re stargazing, when really, Tommy is just in shock, and Tubbo is waiting for the pin to really drop.

Now this feels like an entirely other level of unreal. Now there’s a sense of excitement rising up in Tommy’s chest, making him speechless in utter shock. Phil is the Emperor of the Antarctic Empire, and he wants to adopt Tommy.

Phil wants to adopt *him*.

“I’m going to get adopted.” Tommy murmurs, and Tubbo smiles wide next to him, turning his head to Tommy. Tommy stays staring at the ceiling. “I’m-”

“Did you think you weren’t?” Tubbo asks, laughing a little. Tommy doesn’t respond for a moment. “Hey, don’t tell me you thought you weren’t ever going to get taken in by a family.”

“No, no, I knew-” Tommy cuts himself off, and it feels like the mood has simmered down, quiet and frail. “I knew I was going to get a family- I mean, I already have you, so I was fine with waiting, I just thought-” Tommy takes a breath in, huffs out.

Tubbo had gotten adopted not even that long ago. With that luck, with that good moment, Tommy thought the universe was going to make him wait just a bit more before he got something that was as wonderful as seeing Tubbo finally get a family of his very own.

“I thought it was going to take longer.” Tommy admits. He thought that orphanage was going to be his home for a while longer, he thought he was going to have to wait. And he was fine with that! He was okay with that, because Tubbo was still with him, and as long as Tubbo and him were together, he could wait.

Tubbo hums, smiling wide. “Nope.” He says, popping the p.

“...Tubbo.”

“Hm?”

“Am I going to be considered a prince, then?”

A beat passes. Both of them lie completely still, and Tommy’s words sit in the air for a second.

“Oh, *hell* no-” Tubbo hisses, sitting up abruptly, Tommy bursting out in laughter.

“Hell *yes*- ” Tommy revels in the feeling of excitement and utter awe. Him, a prince. Him! A prince!

He’s got no clue how to be a prince and frankly that’s not his problem because he’s too busy thinking about how he’s going to be *royalty* .

Oh, man, he’s not ever going to get used to that.

“I’m not calling you ‘your highness’. *Never*. I’ve seen every single stupid thing you’ve ever done in your life-” Tubbo speaks, Tommy sitting up to look towards him with a stupid smile on his face.

“No, no, you have to, Tubbo, it’s about the respect-” Tommy nods, enjoying immensely how Tubbo looks like he’s eaten something sour, his face scrunching up.

“No way. You will always be Tommy to me first, not a prince, not an heir to the throne, just Tommy.” Tubbo insists, and he pushes a finger into Tommy’s chest, leaning forward. “You’re my best friend first and foremost, and I know for a fact that you are an idiot.”

“Hey!” Tommy whacks Tubbo’s hand away, frowning. “I’m not!”

“You didn’t even notice that Phil is trying to adopt you when literally all the signs are right there.” Tubbo points out, looking unimpressed and giving a face towards Tommy like he is, in fact, an idiot.

Tommy sighs heavily, leaning back on his hands. “Listen, it’s not that obvious, really-”

“Look at yourself. Look at your shoes.” Tubbo says, and they both glance down at Tommy’s shoes, which are no longer falling apart, dirty and worn, but rather brand new and durable looking.

“...I lost my shoes before! Phil gave me new ones-” He had no clue where his old shoes went, but Phil had made sure Tommy got a new pair before they went out to have Tommy poke around at a sword. Then Tommy had gotten a sword, and a pair of lost shoes became rather irrelevant.

“And another gift! Man, rich people are intense-” Tubbo says, Tommy kicking out a foot and hitting him in the shin.

“Please shut up.” Tommy pleads.

“No.” Tubbo responds, kicking back. “You were being a fool, Tommy, I’m holding this over your head for eternity. When Phil becomes your dad, I’m going to tell him how you didn’t notice until I pointed it out-”

“No, no, don’t do that!” Tommy sits up on his knees, grabbing Tubbo by the shoulders, Tubbo simply giving an evil smile. “You’re going to embarrass me- that’s supposed to be my dad!”

He pauses.

“Holy shit, the emperor wants to be my dad.” There’s another rush of disbelief, and Tommy needs to sit back down once more, staring off into the distance with wide eyes.

“Eh, old news.” Tubbo waves a hand, yawning. He freezes, a look of surprise coming over his face as if he’s just realized something. “Wait a minute!” He grabs Tommy by the face, Tommy nearly falling forward. “Do you know what this means now?!”

“...I’m going to be living in a castle?” Tommy responds, raising an eyebrow. And, oh geez, saying it out loud is making him want to lay back onto the ground.

He realizes that the ‘guest room’ he’s been staying in will be his, and his to keep.

That tugs at his heart in a way that makes him have to blink a bit faster.

“Tommy.” Tubbo says, voice dead serious, and he squishes Tommy’s face in his hands. “You *have* to tell Phil about the wings.”

Tommy freezes. “Oh, shit.”

“This is the perfect opportunity! He’s adopting you, and he doesn’t even know that you have wings?! Imagine his reaction, oh my gosh-” Tubbo laughs, excited and overjoyed, and Tommy puts his hands over Tubbo’s, taking in a deep breath, laughing along with him.

“Tubbo, Tubbo- He thinks he’s the only one.” Tommy says, and now that information feels impossibly heavier. What would Phil say? How would he react, knowing that the kid that’s come across his path by pure luck, was a kid who has wings?

Or, really, a tattoo of wings. Tommy doesn’t know how to summon them or anything, but if anyone can figure it out, it’s got to be Phil.

“Techno and Wilbur, they told me- Phil’s searched around the empire before, for people with wings like him. He got his from coming back from the End, the Ender Dragon, but he thinks he’s the only one. He never found anyone else.”

Tubbo’s eyes are wide in shock, and they both stare at each other, the realization dawning over them.

“He thinks he’s the only one.” Tubbo repeats, slowly.

“And he’s *not*.” Tommy whispers, and Tubbo’s face lights up, gasping in disbelief, pulling away from Tommy to put his hands over his own mouth and be at a loss for words.

They both sit in silence again, looking at each other with varying faces of disbelief and pure glee, and then they dissolve into sounds of excitement, yelling and laughing as they wave their hands around.

“Tommy, you’re going to get wings!” Tubbo says, and it hits Tommy directly in the chest, and all he can do is nod frantically in response, a smile stretched from ear to ear. “You’re going to get a family!” Tubbo says, and it hits even harder, Tommy’s throat feeling tight as he keeps nodding, laughing breathlessly.

“Wait, wait, you’re going to get brothers.” Tubbo realizes out loud, and Tommy swallows hard, just nodding, again, and again. “The princes are going to be your brothers, actually! You’re- Tommy?”

Tommy bows his head down, smile wavering even though he feels so impossibly happy. He wants to keep laughing, wants to nod and grin and celebrate with Tubbo because this is everything he could ever want, but it's all too much at once for him to handle.

So, he presses his palms into his face, and cries, a sob breaking out from his chest as he feels like the luckiest kid in the entire empire.

Tubbo scoots forward and hugs him tightly, silent but understanding, and he squeezes Tommy hard enough that it nearly hurts.

"I'm so happy for you, Tommy." Tubbo says quietly, and Tommy sobs even harder, and hugs him back.

Chapter End Notes

oop short chapter-

:D hope it was fun to read tho, I'm back from a small writing break, and now I'm back on the grind

So, till next chapter :P

Don't poke that sleeping dragon, now

Chapter Notes

hi

:P

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The more Tommy turns the thought over in his mind, the more surreal this entire situation becomes. It sounds like something straight out of a storybook, unreal and impossible.

But it's *real*, and *he's* in it, and he's been crying against Tubbo's shoulder for the past ten minutes. Which isn't exactly ideal, or good for his reputation, but it's just them two in the room, and Tubbo has seen him do stupid things all the time, so there's nothing terribly at risk.

Tubbo keeps pointing out things that would change if it means Tommy is to have his home here now, and it's really not helping with how Tommy is pathetically crying like a child.

“-but do you think your birthday would be like- a holiday? I mean, we celebrate the Emperor's birthday with flowers and everything,” Tommy's reminded of that yearly occurrence, of how the statue in the middle of the plaza is surrounded in piles of colorful, bright vibrant flowers that only last for a few days in such cold snow. “-but that's not exactly similar to how everyone knows you back in town. I mean, everyone we've ever worked with will have known our faces, then your birthday is like a royal birthday, then does that mean we should get discounts-”

“Please shut up.” Tommy chokes out, pushing his palms into his eyes, sniffing. He's almost done crying. Nearly. Tubbo isn't helping, because his words mean that a lot more than just him and Tubbo are going to be celebrating his birthday, celebrating him, and that's one hell of a boost to his ego, but also a huge hit to his emotional state, because he's never had a proper family to sing him happy birthday. His eyes are watery again.

“-oh my god, I just realized, Tommy, you’re going to get a fuckton of birthday gifts. Tommy, these rich people are *insane*, you got a sword just because, what are they going to get you for your birthday-?!” Tubbo hits a hand to his own forehead, stammering over the possibilities, and Tommy shoves his face into Tubbo’s arm.

“Shut up, *please*-” Tommy begs, because he’s already overwhelmed by the fact Phil seems to have no problem just throwing gifts at him, his birthday is going to be even worse.

“What if you get a horse, two horses-”

“I can’t take this-”

“You have so much power here, you can literally say you’re the birthday prince and then ask the emperor for everything, Tommy, oh, the power-” Tubbo’s eyes gleam with ideas, world domination probably, and it would be funny if Tommy didn’t feel so fragile at the idea of Phil giving him the world if he just so much as asked.

Tommy smacks him in the side of the head. “You are not *helping*.”

“Ow! Yes I am!”

Tommy sits back, crossing his arms over his chest. “No, you keep going on about ‘oh Phil this, oh dad that-’ Tubbo, I’m going to die-”

“Postpone the dying, please, we still have very important things on the do-to list.” Tubbo holds a hand up and taps at his palm, as if there’s a list written in marker there. Tommy glances to check if there actually is. Thankfully, his hand is free of any written down words.

Tommy sniffs, wipes his face clean once more, and takes a deep breath, willing himself to calm down and not cry anymore. His heart still feels like mush, and the rest of him feels like

curling up on the ground and just staying there, but he refuses to lay down and cry. More.

After all, he's Tommy. He's got this.

"...what's on the to-do list." Tommy asks, after blinking at Tubbo with a tired expression, his eyes a bit red from how much he's been rubbing at them.

"Tommy." Tubbo leans in close, grabbing Tommy by the shoulders, and Tommy just goes with it, lets his forehead knock into Tubbo's. He's drained from this whole ordeal, he wants a nap, preferably in the ridiculously comfortable bed just a few feet away that he can now call his.

He also wants a talk with Phil, maybe. Ask him what the hell is going through his head to bring Tommy of all people to the castle, and also thank him for being an idiot.

"How are we going to tell Phil about the wings?" Tubbo asks, halting Tommy's entire thought process, what little he had.

Tommy pauses, eyes going a bit wide. His gaze flicks from side to side, mind thinking.

"....ah, fuck."

"This one." Wilbur says, holding up a small green box. It's beautiful, with golden carvings all around it, drawing out a pretty picture of wings on the lid. Wilbur opens it up without a second thought, grabs the crown that sits inside and holds it up with one finger. "I used to *love* this one."

"Nope." Techno shoots down Wilbur's offer without a second glance, holding a crown of his own in his hands, staring at the gems that shine underneath his fingertips. "I don't like the

color.”

Wilbur huffs, snapping the box closed and placing the crown on top of his head, ignoring the fact there is already a crown sitting there, and that he’s now wearing two crowns, which makes him look a bit silly.

The two of them are in Phil’s room, which isn’t exactly off-limits, they’re allowed to go in, but Phil has told them before to not snoop, respect privacy, all of that.

However, they have a good reason for digging into Phil’s closet this time, and personally, Wilbur thinks Phil wouldn’t mind if he found out what they were both doing.

Tommy is a new addition to the castle, (an interesting addition, in Wilbur’s opinion, everything has gotten much more hectic since his arrival) and so, he should be welcomed. Not only that, but with how Phil is acting, with what Tommy has been given, it’s so incredibly obvious that Phil’s planning on taking him in, and both Techno and Wilbur think that means he should have a welcome gift into the family.

He’s probably not a hard kid to impress, seeing his reaction to a sword that Technoblade doesn’t even think much of, and his reaction to a book Wilbur has read a million times over.

But either way, there should be a nice gift! Something heartfelt, something nice that really welcomes him in.

So they broke into Phil’s closet to look for a crown.

“You have said no to the past three ones I chose, I’m starting to think you’re being overly picky.” Wilbur says, throwing the box onto Phil’s bed, where Technoblade is sitting down with his legs crossed, priceless crowns placed onto the bed around him. He puts the crown he was looking at down, and goes to pick up another one, running his thumb over the ruby that sits at the base of the metal.

“I’m not, and you’re being picky too, I offered like four different ones and you didn’t even look at the second one-” Technoblade raises his eyes up from the crown in his hands, snorts a little at the two crowns sitting on top of Wilbur’s head.

“Because that one isn’t nice, *and* it’s missing a gem-” Wilbur points out, holding a finger up. He jumps onto the bed beside Techno, and it disrupts the jewelry sitting around them, a few being dangerously close to the edge of the bed. The twins pay it no mind.

“Excuses, like he’d care.” Technoblade scoffs. He holds the crown in his hand up sideways, waving it around practically in Wilbur’s face. “He’s going to look at it and go ‘ooh shiny’ and that’s a job done-”

“I think you’re mistaking him with Phil.” Wilbur cuts him off with a grin, plucking the crown out of Techno’s hand.

That’s one out of the many secrets Wilbur and Techno harbor thanks to being the sons of the Emperor. The specific secret being Phil likes shiny things. A lot.

He’s down-low about it, so no one has ever noticed, but there’s a reason Phil owns so many rings, so many crowns, earrings, jewels, you name it. People may brush it off as the fact he’s the Emperor, and so he has the riches and the ability to simply have such things. Someone that important should probably have priceless diamonds in his room, right?

Really, Phil couldn’t care less about the cost, or the reputation, or even the importance of having them. Maybe a few crowns have history, have sentimental importance, but mostly? He just likes shiny things.

“It’s *nice*.” Phil had confessed to them one night, when Wilbur and Techno were shown the actual amount of jewelry Phil had, and honestly, Wilbur had felt a bit concerned. “I just like having them.” There was a literal pile of rings that Wilbur could dig his hands into.

Wilbur maybe understands it just a bit. Not to Phil’s extent, no way, what Phil has could possibly be considered a problem if he weren’t royalty. With Wilbur and Technoblade, they’re not one for jewelry that much, but gold is nice.

In the way that Phil puts it. It's *nice*. As a result, both him and Techno have a few golden rings, golden crowns. Techno's favorite sword is a shiny gold. Wilbur's favorite necklace is gold as well.

Quietly, Wilbur hopes Tommy won't be weirded out by the fact the royal family has a quiet hoarding problem with valuables.

"I like this one." Technoblade gestures to a crown that's nearly falling off the bed, and he holds it out to Wilbur, who takes it and swaps it for the one he had taken from Techno. "That one suits him."

"Hm." Wilbur turns it over in his hands, smiling at how it's made of gold, with rubies embedded on the outside of it. It looks as if the gold was woven by hand, and part of Wilbur wants to try balancing this one on top of his head too.

He tries to imagine Tommy wearing it. His mind thinks of the teen smiling brightly, crown on his head. His mind jumps to thinking of Tommy around the castle, more specifically, in the castle halls. How would that be, having a new face walking around? Wilbur's been so caught up in the idea of having a new addition around that he's forgotten about the feelings that come with it, and the heavy decision as well.

"How do you feel about getting a new little brother?" Wilbur asks, voice slow and careful. The words make his heart squeeze, and he never thought he'd be an older brother (He's always the youngest, according to Techno, even if they are twins) but this is real. It sinks in with truth, and Wilbur pauses, the excitement fizzling out into something else entirely.

Technoblade looks at him with a weird look, raising his eyebrows. He snorts. "Where did that come from?" He asks, holding his hand out for the crown in Wilbur's hands. Wilbur gives it over, sighing.

"I mean- Phil's obviously focused on him. I'm overjoyed by it, but also think about it. It's not just a new face or anything, this is a new addition to the family. The royal family, everything. How do you feel about calling him your little brother?"

It's a wonderful feeling, in Wilbur's opinion. He's already adopted Tommy mentally, even if Phil got cold feet and backed out now, he's fairly sure Technoblade would join him in dragging the kid back to the castle.

Tommy's a spitfire, through and through. If there's one thing Wilbur hates, and knows that Techno hates as well, it's when things around the castle get boring. But with Tommy, their first impression was a fight in an alleyway, a food fight at the dinner table, sneaking out of a window and sneaking into their study room.

Wilbur thinks it's wonderful.

"Maybe this crown isn't good enough, hm." Technoblade mutters offhandedly, avoiding Wilbur's question entirely. Wilbur whacks him in the arm.

"Come on." Wilbur presses, leaning close with a grin that's poking fun. "You like him."

"He's interesting, for sure." Technoblade pushes his palm into Wilbur's face, nearly pushing him off the bed, ignoring Wilbur throwing swears at him. "And he saved Phil's life, so that's a good first impression in my opinion."

Wilbur rolls off the bed, sitting on the floor and peeking over the bed covers, narrowing his eyes. He stares at Techno for a bit, and while Techno pretends to not see him, he can see the way Techno's face shifts into something strained.

"Admit it." Wilbur whispers, voice low as if they're saying something evil. "He's endearing."

"He's interesting." Technoblade repeats, raising his head to Wilbur, and faltering. "He's..."

Wilbur raises his eyebrows.

Technoblade huffs through his nose, places the crown down onto his lap. “I think... it’ll be nice to have him around.” He says slowly, and while it doesn’t say much, it says everything to Wilbur.

“It’ll be *nice*.” Wilbur responds, the last word in the tilting tone that Phil had used for the trinkets he adored so much.

“Nice.” Technoblade repeats, huffing at the inside joke.

Phil quickly makes his way back to where he had left his guests before, while also getting word that Tommy and Tubbo were still in Tommy’s room. He’ll give them a bit of space before he calls them back, the two of them are obviously close, and Phil thinks it would do them some good to have some time together to talk about everything.

Technoblade and Wilbur have also last been seen in the living quarters, and Phil feels a bit wary at that information being presented to him, but he’s sure they won’t cause any trouble. Today’s a special day, and they know to be kind to guests. After all, they’ve had classes for the specific manners, even if they hardly use them, it’s been drilled into their heads.

Niki and Ranboo aren’t where Phil had left them, and they’ve instead wandered downstairs to the gardens, the guards at the front doors telling Phil they’ve been walking around in there for the past ten minutes or so.

Phil nods, walking in and pushing the doors open, hearing them close quietly behind him as he takes in the greenery, the flowers and life around him.

It’s a bit warmer than usual in here, but it’s not suffocating. Phil’s been to the nether, and after being in that stuffy place, this is not much.

He walks ahead, listening for any voices or any footsteps, and he can hear someone laughing nearby. He heads towards it, ducks underneath a plant and finds Niki and Ranboo, Niki holding up a blue flower to Ranboo's face. She seems to be smothering the petals into his nose, and Ranboo scrunches up his face, sneezing.

Phil walks up to them with a smile, pushing down the last of the wariness that had come from the mishap with the portal. Ranboo yanks up his mask the moment he sees Phil, and Niki pauses, turning around to see why.

"Oh, your majesty." Niki nods at him, Phil nodding back. "Everything alright?"

Phil waves a hand. "Yes, everything is fine. Just some paperwork that had needed to be sorted out. Are you two enjoying the garden?"

"It's wonderful." Niki smiles, holding the flower to her chest. "I've never seen so many flowers in one place. Save for when your birthday comes around." The plaza is always adorned with flowers for the Emperor's birthday. Niki finds it to be lovely, and she always puts a few flowers in a vase on the counter of her bakery during that week.

"This isn't even the main garden, if you'll believe it." Phil shrugs. "I'm glad you're enjoying it though."

Niki hums, giving the flower in her hand to Ranboo, who holds it carefully with two hands, as if it'll shatter in between his fingertips. "I wanted to ask a question, if I may."

"Go ahead."

"Why was Tommy called up to the castle?" Niki asks, and she asks it as if she just needs to be reminded. Her smile is warm, but her eyes hold something more, and Phil pauses for just a moment, blinking. "I can't imagine that everything so far has just been a thank you gift."

Phil flicks his gaze to Ranboo, who's looking at his wings with a curious look. Phil huffs.

“Is it that obvious?” Phil asks, scratching at the back of his neck. He knows he may be going a bit overboard with the gifts, but he hasn’t even given half of what he wants to give, and all he wants is for Tommy to feel welcome.

Niki snorts. “We’re here because Tubbo is Tommy’s best friend. And when we got here, Tommy was dressed up as if he was a prince of the royal family. You look at him as if he’s your own.”

Phil has the decency to look a bit embarrassed at that. “Do I?”

“You do.” Niki nods. “I’ve seen it before.” Many times. Being in a bakery means she will see little ones rather often, and she sees the parents as well. She notices the way they’ll look fondly at their children, who ask for just one cupcake, just one cookie, and then they will bend to their love. “I think it’s sweet. Tommy is a good kid, and I hope you’ll do well for him. As long as you’re not planning anything terrible...”

“I’m not, I’m not.” Phil says immediately, shaking his head. “I just saw him on the streets and thought he’d do well here. My sons are already attached, to be honest, and with that...” Phil shrugs.

Niki smiles. “Phil, I really do hope you give him a good home.” Her gaze shifts into something different, and Phil is suddenly wary of how Ranboo stares over her head, eyes unnaturally bright. Just a moment prior, these two had been playing with the flowers, guests with no threat. At this moment, though, Phil feels a bit concerned for his own safety. “If you don’t, ruler of this empire or not, I will make you *regret* it.”

Well.

Phil laughs, and the entire tension that was in the air fizzles out, Ranboo turning away to go look at the flowers. Niki’s face falls back into something kind. “I hope you do. Hold me to the consequences, Tommy deserves that much if I’m to ever mistreat him.”

“I don’t feel like you will though.” Niki shrugs. “If anything, you’re going to spoil him rotten.”

“Eh, Tubbo can humble him.” Ranboo mutters then, Niki snorting.

Phil takes another look at Niki, thinks of what information he’s gotten from her. He’s had people do background checks, (of course, he needs to have some caution when bringing people up to the castle), and he knows she works in a bakery. Has worked in a bakery for a long time. Has lived with her brother for her whole life.

“Would you be interested in a job?” Phil asks, and Niki blinks. Phil doesn’t think he has an official royal baker. He has bakers, sure, but not a specific one.

Why not?

When Niki brings up the concern of her bakery at home, Phil waves it off with making the job here at the castle only be a part time. He has others who work like that here, wanting to live back at the town as well rather than near the castle and stay up here all the time.

One example that comes to mind is his main royal healer. Puffy, Phil explains, she works part time here. On some days, she’ll be at the castle, and do her job accordingly, and other days, she will go back to the town to her home, and continue her work where she wants. As of now, she’s at the castle, and she’s meant to go home tomorrow.

Niki seems interested, more baffled than anything, and Phil grins.

Puffy is in a fucking cell.

Not that she meant to wind up here, she was dragged in here kicking and screaming. She's underneath the floors of the castle, in the winding stone halls that surround the mysterious portal that everyone knows exists.

Every single servant, every single guard, anybody who's spent more than a week in this castle knows of that portal. Knows it sits in the mountain, and knows that the Emperor is rather strict on the protocols around it.

Most don't know specifically where it is, but the guards who are tasked to protect and watch it are very aware of it. Puffy is aware of it, but everything she's learnt about it has been against her will, because she's been dragged head-first into a scheme that's going against the Emperor's wishes, and oh, does she feel sorry for the idiots who thought up that plan.

The Emperor is a kind man. He's a good man, and Puffy knows this easily. She's treated him when he was hurt, she's watched over his sons when they were sick. She's seen the man vulnerable, and when all the walls are torn down, all that's left is a worried dad and a man who is trying his best with the power people have given him.

It's no wonder she's loyal.

Ever since the new guest has come to the castle, things have stirred. Word spread in a snap, the Emperor practically throwing his usual responsibilities out the window like nothing. The only times he does that is when he's overly stressed, or when his kids have gotten hurt.

Neither of those had happened though, no, this time, the Emperor has gotten a new kid.

Tommy.

And word of him and his face had spread even faster. The Emperor has taken in a new kid, and he's an endearing chaotic force, by the looks of it. The princes have taken a liking to him, and Phil's attention has been on nothing but mostly his family for the past 24 hours.

While Puffy is glad, she's not exactly happy with how it's turned out.

Someone noticed how Phil's attention had been turned to the new child, and they jumped for the opportunity.

A group of traitors have broken out within the ranks of the guards who were supposed to protect the portal.

Well, Puffy considers them traitors. They're going against the Emperor's wishes, the most stern orders he's given around the castle.

They're going after the portal.

Last night, the first attempt was scuffed. A magic-user was snuck in, and several important books were stolen overnight, but it didn't make a single dent on the door. Obviously, people took notice. The Emperor is tightening his security, no doubt, and it's a matter of time until this terribly put together plan falls apart, but Phil is still distracted.

And Puffy is in a cell.

Today was her last day of the week, dammit. She's supposed to get back home tomorrow night. But instead, she had found someone poking around in her potions, and when she went to call for the guards, two guards had come from behind her, and she was dragged away.

Just her luck, to accidentally stumble across a plan to break into the most secure place in the entire empire.

She sits here with all the information she did not want, and she had only gotten it because the people who dragged her here would not shut *up* .

And she sits here with the full knowledge that this plan is going to crumble and burn. She's looking forward to it. Maybe she'll get a raise for being imprisoned here.

Although, she is a bit worried as to why they were poking around with her potions.

Either way, there's not much she can do. They offered her a spot in this stupid plan, and she responded with a colorful response and trying to kick the person nearest to her in the stomach.

She knows Phil. And she knows, most of all, that she can trust him. With her life, and with her safety. The portal is locked for a reason. The portal is hidden away, for a good reason. She doesn't know why, but she doesn't need to. It's the only thing Phil has been so earnest about, protective of, other than his sons.

For that reason, she will never go along with the plan to break into it. Even with all the offers thrown at her.

"But he's hiding something. Something from us all! What if it's a weapon, or resources, or unknown magic?" They had asked her, trying to change her mind.

"I couldn't care less." Puffy deadpanned from the other side iron bars. "What you're doing is going against the direct order of the Emperor, and I for one, can't wait for the fallout."

They didn't seem happy with her after that, so they left her alone. No matter how much she poked around, or tugged at the cell door, she was stuck here.

Puffy really feels just a bit sorry for the idiots who've made this plan. There's been times where Phil's opened that door. Sometimes, just to go in by himself, and sometimes...

Sometimes, Phil really shows what he can be when he's pissed off. He will drag a person with him to the portal, and that person won't be seen ever again.

There have been a handful of times when assassins have gotten too close to the princes' rooms.

And in those nights, Phil had reminded her of the dragon he slayed so many years ago.

He's protective of what's his. He's protective of his people. He's a kind soul, a kind person, but somehow everyone forgets how he fought in that war years ago.

Those who get dragged into the portal room by Phil, don't come back with him.

Puffy sighs. She's not worried about being left in here. She's meant to be back home by tomorrow night anyway. When she doesn't arrive at home, her own sons will raise hell, because there's only two reasons as to why Puffy wouldn't be home on a day where she is supposed to be.

First reason, someone of the royal family being deathly ill. If that were the reason, she would send a letter down to her sons and they would know that she's needed.

Second reason, she's in trouble.

She supposes that the people here may figure out a way to send a letter home, but she doubts it, for they're all idiots, and she's sure that this will fall apart in a disaster.

Tomorrow's supposed to be nacho night for dinner. She knows that Dream and Foolish are going to raise absolute hell when she doesn't come home.

So with that, she sits back, and just waits.

The plan to break into the portal isn't a good plan, but it's being pulled along by people who are desperate, and so sure they are doing something good for the kingdom. Curiosity kills the cat, and that's a good way to describe what will happen to these ones.

The night where the first attempt to get in was a terrible attempt. Eyes were immediately on them, but to their luck, the emperor's entire attention had not yet fallen onto them. He was still distracted.

But, things still pop up in their way. Not everyone is willing to go against the Emperor and his wishes, but more than a few people have fought and lost in the stone halls underneath the castle. More than a few people are locked away, in cells that are rather abundant.

Sam is one of those who fought, or rather, is fighting.

He's a guard who works specifically to protect that portal. It's a bit of a boring job at times, but he's serious about his orders, and at the very least when his shift is over, his pay works well, and he's granted a home from the majesty himself.

A breach was reported last night, of someone trying to get past the doors. When Sam had asked for the interrogation of the guards on patrol last night, he was instead met face first with the people who tried breaking in.

He's told of their plan, of the idea to enter the portal, see what the Emperor is hiding in the End, and he's given all the information. He listens, baffled, speechless, and hears that there are fifteen people in all, involved in this plan. Not all of them are even actually guards. More than half are people who have been snuck in, and they're here for their own gain, taking the place of guards who have been locked away. But a few are absolute traitors, and that makes him burn.

Phil is distracted with his new son, so it's better to strike now, they tell him. Better to strike when the dragon's attention is not on them.

Sam asked, pretended for just a moment that he was listening.

They were after the portal, and the possible riches inside, and Sam pretends to be curious, pretends to be onboard. This needs to get the Emperor now, a break-in right under their nose, while the entire castle is distracted with the new prince.

And then he lost his temper.

For the next step in the plan was to keep the Emperor's attention on his new child. With that being to poison him.

"What." Sam says, voice heavy, anger flowing into his veins.

"Not lethally of course! We're planning on slipping just a bit of poison into the kid's food for dinner. The most he'll be is sick in bed for the next few days. With that, the Emperor will be so worried, that he won't even notice--"

Sam had punched them across the face.

That blew his cover pretty quick.

He fought his best, but he's outnumbered quickly, and when he wakes up, he's in a cell.

"Welcome to the land of living." A woman says, hovering over him. "Glad to have you here."

Puffy is a well known face around the castle, and Sam...well, he's not really well known. He's more of the main guard for the portal, he doesn't really wander around the castle that much, and he's never hurt either, so Puffy doesn't see him.

But that's hardly a concern.

Sam jolts up, eyes wide.

"Woah! Careful, I'm not sure how hurt you got when getting in here, but they practically threw you into the cell doors earlier-"

"They're going to poison the kid." Sam cuts her off, and Puffy pauses.

"...w-what?"

"The new prince, the one the Emperor has brought in-" Sam gets up, slams at the bars. "HEY!" He yells, and his voice echoes down the halls, but he doesn't think it reaches anyone who should hear.

"Wait, no, they were after the portal, weren't they?" Puffy asks, jumping to her feet as well. "Why would they-?!"

"His majesty is too focused on the new kid to give his full attention to the rats that are in the castle. They want him to be more distracted, so they're poisoning the kid."

"I'm the royal nurse." Puffy breathes out, and she's hit with sheer horror. She's the royal nurse, she's meant to take care of the royal family. If she's not there- "Help me pull at the door!"

Both her and Sam go to tug at the cell door, shaking it, hitting the lock. Sam tries kicking it in, the slam of metal ringing out. Puffy looks around for a rock, anything. They're both people of the Antarctic Empire, and they're both people of the Emperor.

They're both loyal. But also, they both have a concern for the child who's been brought into the castle, who's important to Phil.

Who's in danger, without even knowing it.

Puffy screams out into the stone halls as Sam tries to break the door with a rock in hand. This has gotten even worse than she thought.

She's worried, for sure. And she's relieved when Sam tells her the poison shouldn't be lethal.

But now she definitely knows that the idiots who have thought up of this are royally *screwed*.

Tommy and Tubbo are called out of Tommy's room to go to dinner, and they quietly pretend as if Tommy was not going through an entire emotional dilemma for the past half hour or so.

Technoblade and Wilbur seem smug for no reason, and to be honest it annoys Tommy just a bit.

Niki and Ranboo seem comfortable though, and when Ranboo walks over to talk with them, he tells them of the giant garden that sits in the castle walls. Tubbo is ecstatic about that, and Tommy is definitely curious.

Their little crowd is walking through the halls, Phil at the front, and they're led to the dining room, where Tommy's been twice already. He feels a bit bad about trashing it the first time, now that he's remembering it.

Dinner is just as ridiculous as it was yesterday, and Tommy is still just as baffled. Tubbo hits him in the arm as he's freaking out, and Tommy feels the same in his reaction.

Phil sits at the end of the table, Technoblade next to him, and Wilbur next to Techno. Niki sits beside Wilbur, and Ranboo sits across her. Tommy gets to sit beside Phil, and of course, Tubbo is next to him.

There's bowls of soup placed for them already, that, with the food that's also in front of them.

Technoblade looks at Tommy to see his reaction, to see how he whispers at Tubbo, the two of them snickering and excited to even be here. His eyes fall down to Tommy's plate, and he falters. He looks at Tommy's dish, then looks at Wilbur's. Looks at his own.

He nudges Wilbur as the others are distracted with the dinner before them.

"Oh gosh, this is a lot." Niki murmurs, Tubbo laughing. "How can there be so much?!"

"Anything that's left over is usually left up for grabs." Phil shrugs, drinking from his own cup, Tommy reaching over and picking at a bread roll. "It's all gone by the end of the day."

Wilbur tilts his head to Techno, who leans in towards him. He whispers into Wilbur's ear, talks quietly of a small suspicion, maybe just paranoid, maybe just the voices in his head being strange, but Tommy's food seems *off*.

Wilbur's eyes fall to his own plate, and then to Tommy's and a horrified look comes over his expression.

The soup is a different color. Just barely, not enough for someone who's never tried it to notice, but enough for Wilbur, Techno to absolutely take note of. They're been through their fair share of poisonings, and they've had this soup a million times over. Techno notices how strangely *green* Tommy's soup looks, and Wilbur's heart stops.

Tommy reaches up to grab his spoon, and Wilbur slams his hands onto the table, standing up out of his chair. It screeches back loudly, and everyone turns their head to him. "Tommy,

don't eat that!"

It's said with such panic that Tommy just freezes, and Tubbo slaps the bread that's in his hand to the ground, as if it'll come to life and attack Tommy.

"My bread!" Tommy frowns. Technoblade gets up out of his seat.

"Give me your bowl." He asks, and Tommy slides it over, their company watching with wide eyes.

Phil watches with an unreadable expression.

Wilbur slides his own soup across the table, gets up to stand behind Tommy, who looks to Ranboo, Tubbo. They both stare back with a worried expression.

"There's something put in this-" Technoblade says, placing the bowls so they're side by side. The difference is obvious now, and Tommy's looks drastically different than Wilbur's. "This was tampered with."

"What the hell-?" Wilbur holds Tommy's shoulder with a frown, and the table rises up in concern, voices talking over each other in confusion and anger. Niki looks appalled, and Ranboo seems concerned. Tommy glances towards Tubbo, who's pushing his own plate away with a wary look.

There's the sound of a cup being placed down with a loud *clink*, and the table falls quiet, the atmosphere in the room seeming to grow unnaturally tense. Everyone's eyes are drawn to the Emperor who sits at the end of the table, and his cup is cracked on the bottom.

Tommy pauses, any words that might've been said dying in his throat. Technoblade stands up straight, clearly unhappy, and Wilbur's not amused with any of this either.

But their faces, their expressions are nothing compared to Phil.

Phil smiles thinly, staring at the tainted food with a burning look. Phil's never been like this in front of Tommy, all Tommy has seen is him being kind, him being friendly. He's reminded of the war that he was born into, and how it ended.

Phil stands up out of his seat, quickly excusing himself to go fetch a few guards, and to get some food that isn't messed with.

He looks *pissed*.

Chapter End Notes

looks at the 'Phil is not a force to be reckoned with' tag hehe

You know it's kinda funny to think about how technically, yall are chat, ye? So like when you read about the poison, I can BET yall were like NONONONO, and so it's funny if you think about that translating as chat into Techno's head where he looks at the soup and all of you are just like THAT SOUP IS EVIL GET IT AWAYYYY

funny thoughts.

thanks for reading!

The ball is starting to roll

Chapter Notes

Hallo!

I dedicate this chapter to Shmeck, bc she's very cool and also I love the drawings she's made for this story :D

hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The thing is, Phil is a bit used to this sort of thing. He's honestly grown used to it all, the idea of an attempt being made on his life is hardly scary, more annoying, if anything.

An assassin trying to break into his room, poisons being snuck into his drinks, an ambush in the middle of the streets, when he is trying to just visit his people.

But the thing is, Phil has been ruling for a long while, and he is a well-loved ruler. He protects the kingdom, and in turn they protect him, the one with the power they gave. What good is Phil as a king if his people don't care for him?

The entire kingdom started because Phil gave a home. A place for people to be safe and to be under his watch.

Assassins very rarely get into his room thanks to the vigilance of his guards, who don't let anyone pass the hallway when Phil and his family are asleep. Usually, his guards will fight tooth and nail, even to the point where there have been incidents where they lay on the ground in a puddle of blood, yelling at an intruder that's trying to get away.

They're very devoted, and Phil is grateful for that. The few people that have ever broken into his room in the middle of the night were sentenced to jail time, and left to the mercy of his angry people.

Those who got near the princes' room, though, those poor souls are at the Emperor's mercy. And at that sort of crime, the Emperor doesn't *have* mercy.

Poisons had always been a tricky one, but all his cooks are loyal, and Phil never needed to worry much on that one. He did go through a bit of training, building up resistance to certain poisons. None of that was ever pleasant, and Wilbur and Techno would stay at his bedside for hours.

Even with that added precaution, usually Phil didn't have reason to worry. All the food that has ever been served to the royal family was always tested before it was placed on the table, and on the two few times it wasn't, and poison slipped by, Phil had been back to full health within just a few days, with Puffy being quick on her healing potions.

After the multiple incidents of poisonings in Phil's past, though, and close calls with his sons, it was strictly made sure that the food was always tested beforehand for poison. All the cooks knew this, anyone in the kitchens were very aware of that rule. It's drilled into anyone who cooks and serves the royal family, because the Emperor's safety, *Phil's* safety can't be put on the line.

The food is always tested beforehand.

"So how the *hell did* a very obvious poison get into the food?" Phil asks, standing at the doorways of the kitchen, all of the cooks responsible for today's dinner crowded around to listen.

Specifically *Tommy's* food. All the other dishes were checked, everything was untouched from being tampered with, except for Tommy's.

Someone specifically went for that kid, and Phil wants to know *who* .

The people huddled around all have their eyes pointed towards the ground, a bit hesitant from Phil's burning stare going their way. It's not hard to see, Phil is angry, and that emotion fills the whole room with tension.

Usually, Phil is a rather calm person. Friendly, even, and he's known for being approachable. But there are plenty of rumors about how Phil can turn down-right scary when one of his children has been put at risk.

Right now, at this moment, Phil's expression and stance? Lives up to the rumors, in everyone's opinion.

The kitchen feels heavy, and you could hear a pin drop with how quiet everyone has gotten. Phil is the only one speaking up, and he doesn't need to talk loudly to be heard.

Karl and Quackity are among the people in the kitchen, and they glance towards each other with a wary look, confused as to how poison got into the food. Especially such obvious poison as well. It had quite literally discolored the soup, that would've been noticed right off the bat, and yet it reached the table anyway.

"Your majesty," Someone speaks up, voice slow and careful. "I swear to you all the food here was tested before it was sent out."

"By who?" Phil asks, tilting his head. His tone is patient, reasonable, but a few of the cooks are still a bit scared of the possibility that they're going to leave the castle tonight with no job.

"By our usual volunteers. We have three, and they all check the food willingly before it's sent out to the dinner table."

Phil crosses his arms, seeming to take in the words for a moment. "Okay. I want those three in front."

There's the shuffling of people moving to the side, not a word spoken as three people step in front of the small crowd, the other cooks stepping back to give them space. Quackity finds himself right in the middle of the three testers.

"You three check the food for any tampering before you send it out, correct?" Phil questions, raising a finger to all three of them. "Did any of you fail to check it, or notice something unusual and fail to report it?"

Phil gets three resounding '*no, your majesty*'s before the room falls into silence again.

Phil sighs under his breath. "I wouldn't be angry if you simply failed to report it. Maybe it was just a mistake on your part, that's fine, but I need to know if the poison came from this kitchen, or from outside."

"Your Majesty, if I may?" Quackity raises a hand up, Karl having to stand on his toes to look over someone's shoulder so he can see better. Quackity continues with Phil's nod. "I checked that soup. I checked each one before they went out to the dining room, and each one seemed perfectly fine. I didn't see anything tampered with, and I'm not affected by consuming any of it. I can confidently say, on all of our behalfs, that poison did not come from this kitchen."

For a moment, Phil just blinks, leaning back on his heels with his wings shifting behind him. Then he nods, and there's a collective quiet sigh of relief that goes through the room.

"I believe you. And I trust all of you. Thank you for your time, and be wary until we know who exactly tampered with the food." And with that, Phil turns around and walks out of the kitchen.

The kitchen falls into overlapping conversations, everyone scattering out to their own groups, and Karl makes his way over to Quackity, grabbing him by the arm.

"You really didn't see anything wrong with the soup before it got sent out?" Karl asks, Quackity internally screaming a bit for having to deal with Phil's silent intense anger.

“Yeah- I mean, it tasted fine. The color seemed good, and I didn’t smell anything off.” Quackity nods, taking a big breath in, then letting it out in a big sigh. “But MAN, that was scary...” Quackity’s voice wobbles, like he’s going to start crying, and Karl slaps a hand over his own mouth to keep from laughing. “He was angry at meeee! I thought I was going to disintegrate on the spot!”

“Yeah, I’ve never seen him like that.” Karl hums, trying to think of any other time he’s ever seen Phil truly angry. Him and Quackity have only been working here for a few months, and so far, there hasn’t been anything like that before.

It was a bit nerve-wracking, in his opinion.

“Godspeed to the idiot who did poison the food.” Karl says happily, clapping his hands together with a nod, and Quackity chokes on a laugh.

Phil walks away from the kitchens with guards coming back to him with as much information as they can. Tommy, Wilbur, Technoblade, and their other guests have been put into another secure, safe room at the moment with food that was made sure to be not tampered with. That reassurance gives Phil some relief, but it doesn’t help with what comes next.

“And do we know what type of poison it was?” Phil questions, fiddling with a ring that sits on his finger as he walks down the hall. “Was Puffy able to recognize it?”

“I’m afraid she wasn’t in her office, and she wasn’t anywhere around the castle, your Majesty.”

Phil nearly pauses at that, but keeps walking, frowning a bit. “Did she leave?” He asks, then follows up right away with- “Send someone down to her house back in town to tell her to come back. Might need her around a bit more.”

Puffy is usually knowledgeable in potions and anything of that sort, so if she were here, she might've been able to test the soup and figure out how deadly it was, how it could've been made, anything along those lines. However, today was supposed to be her last day of the week, and she was meant to go home tomorrow. Phil wouldn't be too shocked to know if she went a day early, though. Occasionally, she'll do so for certain reasons back home, and Phil usually lets it slide.

But they need her now, or at least as soon as possible, so Phil has someone sent out, and he knows it'll take at least an hour, even with that person going full speed.

All he can do right now is wait a bit and keep a careful watch over Tommy and everything around him. If someone around here is trying to kill Tommy, then Phil would need to strike back accordingly.

After all, he does not take kindly to threats towards his children.

Tommy picks at his newly acquired piece of bread with a slight frown on his face. The couch he's sitting on is comfortable, for sure, and he's also just resting his legs onto Ranboo's legs, purely to try and piss him off, but it doesn't help with the mood-downer of apparently nearly getting poisoned.

Tubbo is beside him, a plate of food in his lap and a fork in his hand. His shoulder is digging into Tommy's back, but Tommy ignores it in favor of ripping his piece of bread in half and eating one half rather angrily.

Niki and Techno are sitting across from them, with their own food on their plates, and Wilbur sitting on the floor, resting his elbows on the little table between the couches. There's a half eaten plate of food in front of him, and he doesn't seem to be wanting to touch it anytime soon.

“Someone is out to get me.” Tommy mutters, his words a bit muffled since he’s still chewing on his bread. He takes a moment to properly eat the bread, then speaks again, to no one in particular. “No, the universe is out to get me. My luck has been a solid zero for the past like 24 hours and I am not appreciating it.”

“Well I wouldn’t say it’s been at a complete zero.” Tubbo responds, Wilbur raising his head up to Tommy. He snorts at how Tommy gives a glare his way, and Tommy’s unhappy expression cracks just a bit to let a small smile through. “This food is nice.”

“ *My* food was poisoned.”

“But you know, you didn’t eat it.” Ranboo shrugs. His usual mask is pulled down around his chin, at Tubbo’s never ending persistence, but he’s very obviously a bit wary with anyone looking in his direction. As such, Tommy stares at Wilbur while responding to Ranboo.

“But I could’ve.” Tommy raises his eyebrows, Wilbur frowning a bit. “I could’ve eaten poison, Ranboo, poison!”

“I doubt the poison was meant for you specifically.” Techno says, leaning forward on the couch and putting his plate onto the table. “It was probably meant for either me or Wilbur. Or Phil, maybe.”

“It was obvious poisoning, too.” Wilbur says to Tommy. “I’ve had that soup a thousand times over, I can tell you for sure it is not that color.”

“Thank you for pointing it out.” Niki gives a specific look towards Tommy. “Things might’ve gone much worse if Tommy *did* eat it.”

“Honestly, after all of this, I’d wouldn’t be surprised if Tommy died from soup, of all things.” Tubbo mutters, before taking a bite of his food. Tommy scoffs.

It's not that Tommy is bothered too much over the attempt on his life, well, he is, but with everything that's happened, it's not that important. No, what's bothering him at the moment is the idea of this happening again.

Mainly because of what Tubbo had told him earlier. If he gets into the royal family, he has a feeling poisoned soup would be a small concern compared to everything else that he'll end up carrying.

On one hand, Tommy is glad for any chance at having a family, especially with people who he knows are nice, and at the very least, not boring. But on the other, Tommy becoming a prince, going from one to hundred that quick? The clothes he's wearing are nicer than anything he's ever had.

If he gets adopted here, are these going to become his fucking *casual* clothes?

Tommy likes to think he's pretty important, but if he becomes a literal prince of the Antarctic Empire, there'll be no doubt that he *is* important. He's not going to be just some orphan kid running around for any spare jobs, looking to get money to buy snacks down at the plaza, he's going to be a literal member of the royal family, with an allowance that will no doubt dwarf any amount of money he's ever gotten.

He's freaking out, just a bit.

It's entirely jarring, and Tommy kinda hopes that maybe the adoption thing was just Tubbo thinking wrong, and maybe they're terribly off track. Perhaps Tommy will go home today, back to the orphanage. Could be that.

Or maybe he's going back into denial, who knows. There's a small voice in his head that sounds a lot like Tubbo that insists he's falling back into denial. Personally, Tommy does not like that voice.

Tommy turns his head over to Technoblade, who's carrying a conversation with Niki, him and Wilbur probably talking about something boring. Tommy still has half a piece of bread in his hands.

He chucks it at Techno's face.

Wilbur chokes on air as Techno flinches back, the piece of bread bouncing off and hitting the floor. Niki is abruptly interrupted in the middle of her conversation with a face of disbelief, and Ranboo seems to stutter a bit, pulling his mask up over his nose and trying to melt into the couch cushions.

"Tommy!" Niki exclaims, her voice incredulous, and Tommy can hear Tubbo sputter ridiculously.

Technoblade narrows his eyes in Tommy's direction just as Wilbur begins to laugh, and Tommy realizes as to why Niki, Ranboo and Tubbo are a bit appalled at the fact Tommy's thrown a piece of food at Techno's face. To them, Technoblade and Wilbur are princes, important and grand, by all means.

To Tommy, though, he honestly just sees them as annoying. Sure, there's a slow realization of 'oh wait these guys are heirs to the throne' but it's very much washed out by the feeling of spite Tommy has sitting in his chest. He reaches behind him to Tubbo. "Give me your fork."

"No, no-" Ranboo tries to say, grabbing out to stop Tommy while Tubbo just hands his fork over without thinking.

"Ah- Wait-" Tubbo tries to grab his fork back as Technoblade gets to his feet and jumps over the couch to duck behind it. Tommy flings the fork towards his direction.

"What did I do?!" Technoblade yells, Niki dodging to the side when the fork hits the couch and lands onto the cushions.

"I'm blaming the soup on both you and Wilbur, since you guys were the ones who were supposed to be poisoned." Tommy explains, a bit calmly, like it's simply just a fact. "Ranboo, give me your fork."

“No!”

“Hey, I *saved* you from getting poisoned!” Wilbur protests, ducking a bit as Tommy grapples for the fork on Ranboo’s plate.

“Why do you think I’m targeting Techno first?” Tommy responds, Wilbur seeming a bit thoughtful at that.

“Tommy, stop throwing things-” Niki gets up from her seat as Ranboo and Tommy starts to struggle a bit for who’s going to get control of the fork. Tubbo reaches over to steal the food off of Ranboo’s plate. “Hey!”

“Technoblade, do you think you could win in a fight against Tommy?” Wilbur asks, leaning back on his hands, ignoring the raised voices of Ranboo trying to save his fork from Tommy’s clutches. Tubbo’s acquired a new plate of food, and he sits by the edge of the couch, picking at it and eating what he deems good enough.

“What kind of question is that?” Technoblade answers, Tommy very much hearing the mocking in his voice.

“I could beat you in a fight, couldn't I?” Tommy asks, pushing his palm against Ranboo’s face, still trying to pull the fork out of his grip. Niki is trying to pull him away from Ranboo, and Tommy carries on. “I can, I can! Tubbo, back me up.”

“He can’t.” Tubbo answers while eating a piece of food, Wilbur snorting.

“You can’t.” Technoblade repeats, and now he’s definitely mocking him. Tommy gives up on the fork, and instead goes for Techno instead, Niki and Ranboo desperately trying to stop him from picking a fight with royalty. Tommy notes that they don’t know that he’s already picked a fight with Wilbur, and he’s not dead yet. “What are you, twelve?”

“I’m sixteen, you *fuck-*”

“Fifteen, actually-” Tubbo corrects. “Our birthday is in a few days-”

“Tommy, stop *kicking* me-” Ranboo narrowly avoids being kicked in the head. Tommy intends for his next target for his foot to be Techno’s face.

“Hey, Tubbo, give me some of that.” Wilbur asks, Tubbo going over to him and sharing his plate of food that he stole from Ranboo.

The front door opens, and everyone pauses for just a moment, all looking towards the door. Technoblade peeks over the couch to see Phil walking in with a quiet sigh. “Alright, so far everything seems to be alright, we’re not sure where-” He pauses.

“Phil!” Wilbur grins. “Technoblade wants to fight Tommy.”

“I didn’t say that-” Technoblade protests.

“What?” Phil asks, confusion evident on his expression as his attention falls to the random fork innocently just laying on top of the couch. “I was gone for twenty minutes-?”

“*Oh-* Niki, Niki, let me go, watch, I got this-” Tommy nods, trying to put his fists up towards Techno’s direction, Techno just giving an unimpressed look.

“I think it’s in my best interest to not at all let go-” Niki responds.

“-but I would not decline at a chance to beat him in a fight-” Technoblade continues, ignoring Tommy’s death glare being sent his way. Tommy seems dead set on proving a point that he’s able to fight, but really all Techno can see is something along the lines of an angry raccoon. It faintly reminds him of the time a raccoon stole Wilbur’s food one time when they had gone to visit down. That thing had been vicious.

“Don’t you *dare* underestimate me-”

“So, how are you doing, your majesty?” Ranboo asks, trying to be polite as Tommy tries his best to commit a murder.

They decide to move to the courtyard, for the grand fight.

And by fight, it’s more of a very unfair, bullying type of a fight, because Tommy had been told that Techno wanted to try teaching him a few things. Phil thought it would be nice for them to get out of the room, and he said it would be a good learning moment.

Apparently a good learning moment translates to: ‘Techno sweeping your feet out from under you and laughing as you hit the floor’.

“Yeah, Tommy!” Tubbo claps his hands as Tommy slams onto the ground once more, his wooden sword falling out of his hand and sliding away when Techno kicks it. “You’re doing terribly, but I am being supportive!”

“Encouragement!” Ranboo just yells, Tommy wheezing a bit.

“Phil!” Tommy groans, Technoblade leaning back on his heels and looking towards Wilbur, who smiles back warmly at the fact Techno’s just dragged a child.

“You’re doing great, Tommy!” Phil calls out, turning back to Niki and their conversation.

“Uhg.” Tommy turns over and shoves his face into his arms, curling up into a small ball. A foot nudges him in the side.

“Didn’t you say you could win in a fight? This seems a lot like losing, to be honest.” Technoblade says, Tommy groaning again with slight annoyance.

“This is all part of the plan.” Tommy mutters, turning back over onto his back and throwing a arm over his eyes.

“Seems like a terrible plan.”

“You’re just not genius enough to see it.” Tommy waves a hand, trying to think. Okay, maybe he can’t beat Technoblade in a fight. There’s multiple factors going against Tommy, those being the fact that he’s never even fought with a sword before, not even a basic wooden training one. Technoblade is probably trained, being the prince and all. Tommy just has generally bad luck.

Honestly, Tommy feels like the universe cursing him is a big reason as to why Techno has been able to knock him off his feet several times.

“Rematch?” Techno asks, poking Tommy in the chest with his wooden sword, and Tommy bats it away, a new idea popping into his head.

“No, no, new fight.” Tommy sits up, falters at the sight of Techno’s hand hovering in front of him. He takes it, lets Techno pull him to his feet, then goes to grab his sword that had been kicked away earlier. “Okay, I got it, I got it.”

“Got what?” Technoblade asks, raising his sword up, and Tommy takes several steps back so he won’t get dragged into another fight that’ll be over in moments.

“Wilbur!” Tommy declares, turning around and pointing his sword right at Wil, who’s sitting off to the side with the others. “I wanna fight you.”

“...you want to what?” Wilbur asks, Techno snorting. “Fight me? You? Okay, fine, yeah I’ll go-”

“But, but!” Tommy cuts him off, waving a hand and turning his head towards Technoblade. “Techno, you’re fighting him for me. Represent me.”

“Why.” Techno raises his eyebrows.

“Because you are so very cool and nice to me.”

“Nope,” Technoblade shakes his head. “doesn’t sound like me.”

“Then you are a rude bitch.” Tommy switches up, enjoying the way Techno’s face scrunches up at that response.

“No, no, I’ll fight Technoblade.” Wilbur says, walking up to Tommy and taking the wooden sword from his hand. “Maybe I’ll even win, who knows.”

“Doubt that.”

“Wilbur, beat him up.” Tommy whispers, holding a hand over his mouth. “If you win, then you automatically become cooler than him, believe me.”

“I’m already cooler than him.” Wilbur whispers back, leaning down a bit, and Tommy narrows his eyes a bit. “Don’t you think so?”

“...No.” Tommy responds, Wilbur huffing.

“Alright, that’s it, Technoblade, I’m beating you up.”

“What?” Techno asks, slightly thrown off with Wilbur’s sudden determination to fight. “I mean, you can try-” He’s cut off by Wilbur immediately swinging his sword towards him.

Tommy runs off towards Tubbo and Ranboo, sitting beside Tubbo as Technoblade and Wilbur start to actually fight, their swords sounding out each time the wood hits.

“They’re going to kill each other.” Tubbo mumbles, watching with wide eyes as Techno swings so quickly and harshly and he surely would’ve cut off Wilbur’s head if Wil hadn’t ducked in time.

“I sure hope so.” Tommy says back, stretching his arms out in front of him, noting that he’s definitely going to feel at least a little sore from being thrown around by Technoblade.

“I’m back!” Dream calls out into the house, closing the door behind him quietly and working on pulling his shoes off so as to not track snow inside. He’s already a bit soaked from falling into the snow multiple times today, but his shoes and socks are a whole other story.

Dream isn’t exactly surprised, since today he had taken a risk and jumped off a roof, only to land into a pile of snow feet first, but he was hoping his shoes would be a bit more durable against the environment.

Well, at the very least, he didn’t fall flat on his face like last time. The band-aid on his nose underneath his mask still bothers him a bit and reminds him of that incident.

“I’ve got a puddle in my shoe.” Dream says to himself, turning his shoe over and watching as a bit of water pours out onto the welcome mat by the door. Maybe he should be emptying this outside, now that he thinks about it. The growing puddle of water on the floor is something he’s going to have to clean up.

“You’ve got a what?” Dream hears from down the hallway, and he pays the question no mind as he goes to stand right in the middle of the freezing puddle to open the door and shake his shoes out there. “Woah- hey, hey, you’re getting water everywhere!” Foolish exclaims as makes his way over to Dream. He gestures his arms towards the wet ground with bits of snow scattered around. There's a small pair of tweezers in his left hand.

“I’ll mop right now.” Dream responds, hitting his boots against each other outside to shake the last bits of snow off. They’ll dry out by tomorrow, Dream is sure of it.

“Or you could’ve taken your shoes off *outside* .” Foolish stresses, Dream turning towards him and throwing his shoe as a response. “Hey!” He runs down the hallway, Dream’s shoe hitting against the wall and landing on the floor with a thump.

Dream closes the door behind him, putting his other shoe down beside the door and realizing he’s just standing in a puddle of cold water. “Foolish, could you get me a towel?”

“No!” Foolish yells in response, having run back to his room down the hall. “You threw your shoe at me!”

“Guess I’ll just get water everywhere, then!”

“Then you can mop the floors! They needed cleaning anyway!”

“I’ll throw my wet socks onto your bed.”

Foolish’s head pops out into the hallway, a deep frown on his face. “You wouldn’t.”

Dream grins from behind his mask. “Yeah I would.”

“I’ll lock my door.”

“Your door doesn’t lock.” Dream crosses his arms. The lock got broken yesterday from Dream running into it while in a rush. He’s really hoping they can figure out how to fix that before Puffy gets home.

“Ha! Yes it can, I fixed it while you were gone.” Foolish grins triumphantly, and quietly, Dream is glad that problem is fixed.

Dream sighs dramatically, lifting his mask up over his nose so it can show the way he is intensely frowning. “Pleaaase.”

“Fine.” Foolish sighs, going back into his room for a moment, and there’s the sound of a worrying crash, things getting knocked over, and Foolish comes back out as if nothing happened. He goes into the kitchen, leaving Dream just standing in a puddle of water by the front door, arms crossed.

Honestly, even with Dream coming back a bit soaked and also missing the jacket he left this morning with, it’s better than how he usually comes home. Sometimes he comes back with a bleeding knee or a bad bruise on his back. On some rare occasions, he comes home early with his familiar smiley mask in pieces, after a particularly bad fall of some sort. The thing is durable, but not that durable when Dream flat out falls onto his face.

Foolish likes to say that Dream has no self preservation, when really, in Dream’s opinion, it’s entirely the opposite. He has too much self preservation, hence why he goes to such drastic lengths as to not get caught during any sort of game of ‘manhunt’.

He forgets who started the game, but it’s been going on for months, and every day Dream runs out first thing after breakfast to start an overly intense game of tag out in the streets with George and Sapnap. Well, along the lines of tag.

Dream is the target, and his friends are the hunters. A game like that might’ve gotten boring after a few days, with the streets being the same and not many places to run to, but Dream gets competitive.

Stupidly competitive.

It's become habit at this point to just go all out, climb roofs, hide in piles of snow, even use sticks as a weapon at one point, because the way to win is to pin Dream down and catch him, but you can't do that if you're getting smacked across the face with a stick.

"Here's your towel!" Foolish chimes, throwing the towel at Dream's face. Dream pulls it off from his face, and also goes to slip off his mask while he's at it. He's not fond of going without it, but he's home right now, so he's alright with taking it off.

Dream dries off the puddle on the ground and takes off his socks, Foolish retreating into the kitchen as Dream walks past with a bluff of throwing them towards him. He goes to his room, and comes out a few minutes later with clean, dry clothes.

Foolish is back in his room, and Dream stands at the doorway, taking in the organized chaos of random materials and tools that Foolish often uses for his little builds. The room smells of mint, and Dream knows from that, and the way there's a faint green glow coming from Foolish's hands that he's using his magic again.

"Hey." Dream says, the glowing coming to a stop, Foolish turning around in where he's sitting by his desk. There's some sort of intricate design in front of him, maybe made of glass, and Dream waves a hand towards it. "I thought Mom said to not use your powers when she's not home."

"I'm not." Foolish protests, holding up another pair of tweezers, but this one is a different one, and one that Dream is fairly sure he didn't have before. "Okay, just a little bit. I just wanted the right tool-!"

"I'm telling."

"Don't!" Foolish puts the tweezers down, turning in his chair. "I only made just that, honest."

“Only that?” Dream asks, raising his eyebrows. Foolish is capable of creation with his magic, making small things of his choosing, and even repairing something easily, but if he overuses it? He just gets knocked out cold. There’s a reason Puffy has banned him from using it while she’s not home, ever since she got back that one time and found Foolish just passed out on the ground while Dream was still out of the house.

“Yup.” Foolish nods, face almost pleading.

“Hmmm. Okay, but I’ll tell *unless* you do something for me.” Dream says with a grin, holding his mask up to his chest.

Foolish squints at him for a long moment, before sighing. “You know you can just ask me to fix your mask like a normal person.” He holds his hands out anyway, and Dream walks into his room, carefully stepping over a box filled with what looks to be rocks.

“It’s just kinda cracked.” Dream says, giving it over to Foolish, who turns the mask over, finding that there is indeed a small crack at the top of it.

“What, did you run into a wall again?” Foolish asks, running his fingers over the crack, humming a bit.

“No! I fell.”

“Fell off where?”

“Off the ground. On the ground. I was on the ground, and that is where I fell.” Dream nods, Foolish snorting.

“I’m telling Mom you’re jumping off roofs again.”

“Where’s your proof?”

Foolish huffs, turning his back to Dream, but there's a faint green glow that shines with his hands, and a moment later, Dream has his mask back, the crack perfectly gone.

Dream slips the mask back over his face, adjusting the strap on the back of his head, and he pushes the mask over his nose to smile down at Foolish. "Thanks."

"No problem." Foolish nods. "Now get out of my room."

"No." Dream responds, immediately turning around to touch something on the desk.

He's stopped from any mischief though by a loud knock on the front door, and both Foolish and Dream pause, looking at each other with a bit of confusion.

Foolish is the one to go get up and answer it, and Dream follows at his heels, hovering in the hallway as the front door gets opened to show a royal guard standing at their doorway. Usually, the only guard that ever shows up at their house is Eret, and that's because sometimes they have to bring Dream home after causing trouble out in the town.

This one is a royal guard straight from the castle, and there's a horse out in the street that's clearly a sign that they just got here, and rode here.

When they ask for Puffy to return to the castle, Foolish blinks with wide eyes, and looks back at Dream with a matching surprised and slightly worried face.

"Uhm, she isn't here? She was supposed to come back tomorrow, she still has one more day back at the castle?" Foolish answers, offering a shaky smile.

"Is she in the castle?" Dream asks. "Is something wrong?"

They don't get a direct answer, only just that if Puffy shows up, she should be told to get back to the castle as soon as possible. The guard leaves without answering any of their questions, and they both watch them ride off on their horse.

"Dream, put on your shoes." Foolish says, and Dream doesn't even protest, even though his boots are soaked.

Chapter End Notes

Things are gonna start getting exciting soooooon...

Thanks for reading! And thank you for the comments and love! This fic is really well-liked, and I'm glad! I think we all need a no-angst fic full of fluffy shenanigans in our lives, lol

Have a good day :P

don't you just love it when the conflict ESCALATES

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream has stolen a horse.

Now, on a normal day, this would be generally frowned upon. Especially by Foolish, who would probably smack him across the head and say something about respecting other people's property, and all that.

And Dream doesn't have a habit of stealing horses, he did that only once during playing manhunt, and after the lecture Puffy gave him after, he never did it again. (At least, not without getting caught. He always returned the horse after! And Sapnap and George would swear to not tell.) Usually, Dream wouldn't dare to act like a thief, stealing an animal from someone's property and using it as a mode of quick transportation.

This time it's justified, though, because Foolish explicitly gave him permission to get a horse by any means so they can rush to the castle to demand answers. So, the moment Dream gets the word, he jumps someone's fence and runs through the snow to grab a horse that he may or may not have been secretly visiting for the past few weeks.

(He's named the horse Spirit, in his head. The actual owner of the horse knows that Dream sneaks around and visits the horse occasionally, but since no true harm is ever done, he's never been told to stay out.)

Foolish is a bit worried as to how Dream got a horse so quickly, but that concern is washed out with the worry over Puffy and as to why she isn't at the castle. So, he climbs on with Dream, and they take the horse through the streets as fast as possible, their destination being the castle at the top of the mountain.

As they go to catch up with the royal guard that's heading back, though, there's trouble brewing in the castle itself.

The traitors who are looking to go after the portal quickly learn about the failed attempt on Tommy's poisoning, and not only that, but Phil's attention has clearly been turned onto them. Security is getting tighter, it's become impossible to sneak around like before, and the sons of the emperor are practically untouchable, along with the guests that have been invited.

While the Emperor himself is not actively searching for the traitors, he might as well be, with the orders he's given out to report anything suspicious. He has eyes on each hall, each place of the castle, and it's only a matter of time until a new swarm of guards are sent down into the stronghold, and the traitors are found out underneath their disguises of stolen armor.

A new plan needs to be made, and quickly. There's no time to try and break down the door, their best magic users have failed, and it's proved to be practically indestructible. There's only one way in, and that's with the Emperor himself opening the door.

So the traitors need to convince Phil to open the door for them somehow. The only problem here is how would they get the Emperor of the kingdom to listen to their orders, without being taken into custody by the royal guards first?

Drastic measures have to be made.

A strong sorcerer walks out of the stronghold under the disguise of a royal guard's armor. They make their way to the front doors of the castle, with a slow, yet urgent walk, so they may begin at making a distraction for the desperate stunt the traitors about to pull.

The ball begins rolling.

"Your Majesty?" A guard calls from the doorway, waving a hand. "You are needed."

“Sorry.” Phil grins, giving an apologetic shrug to Niki for cutting their conversation short. He stands to his feet, glancing over at Tommy, who’s cheering on with Ranboo and Tubbo, the three of them intensely focused at the fight between the two princes. They clap and cheer and scream with each close call, entertained with how the royal princes show off their respective skills in sword fighting.

At this point, Phil really doubts it’s going to end without some sort of argument between the twins. The fight has nearly gotten vicious, while they both still swing away with their swords, Wilbur’s also punched Techno across the cheek, and Techno has kicked Wilbur in the stomach.

They’re both grinning wildly through it, though, and while there’s probably going to be a few light injuries, they’re having fun.

Phil gives a warning for them to be careful as he walks away, and watches with a snort as Technoblade tackles Wilbur into the ground, the two of them rolling as Tubbo yells about no mercy for the loser.

“Is something wrong?” Phil asks, as soon as he walks out of the courtyard, the guard closing the door behind Phil as they both walk into the hall.

“The person we sent out for Puffy came back with the news that she never arrived home. She’s not in the town, and she’s not in the castle, from where we’ve searched.”

Phil frowns. If Puffy isn’t found in the castle, and she hasn’t gone home, then where is she? She wouldn’t leave without a word and hide somewhere else in the kingdom, she would never leave behind her sons, Phil knows that. He’s heard Puffy talk about them before, and Phil knows she would never willingly leave them behind. So if she’s gone, then it can’t have been by choice.

A sharp worry curls up in Phil’s chest, and he bites at the inside of his cheek as concerns start to rise up in his head.

“And...” The guard trails off, Phil giving his attention back to them. He nods to let them keep speaking. “Puffy’s sons had also followed back the person we sent to the town. They’re currently being held in a room right now. They’re demanding to see you.”

Phil blinks. “Really?” He asks, slightly surprised. Puffy’s said before that her boys are deathly loyal, but he hadn’t thought it meant they would march right up to the castle the moment it seemed their mother’s safety was in danger. “Alright. I’ll go speak with them, then.” Maybe he’ll be able to calm their worries, and then after, he’ll put out a search within the castle to figure out who the hell is giving him this much trouble.

First the portal, then Tommy nearly getting poisoned, and now his royal nurse being missing.

Phil feels a bit peeved, and even though he’s calmed down considerably from the incident at dinner, he can feel it climbing back up. If it keeps climbing, he is fairly sure he is going to end up maiming someone, and he’s sure it’s going to be the culprit responsible for putting Tommy and Puffy in danger.

Letting himself be led through the halls, Phil takes slow, deep breaths, his wings shifting behind him as he walks to the room where his new visitors are currently being kept. Usually, those who just walk up to the front gates of the castle are not at all allowed inside, unless by Phil’s orders.

But these two are the sons of the royal nurse, their faces and reputation a bit well known around in parts of the castle, and they had been rather persistent when they arrived at the castle.

Persistent as in very loud shouting, and then persuasive words that they could perhaps be useful in the new search for Puffy, who has now been put as missing.

The room that Phil walks into is a simple meeting room, quaint and warm. There’s a small plate of food on the table, and the seats are comfortable, yet unused by their guests.

Dream and Foolish are standing on their feet, talking quietly to each other, Dream with his arms crossed, head tilted down, and Foolish with his eyes flicking around the room as he

listens to Dream's rushed words. The moment the doors behind Phil close quietly, they both turn to him with a startling speed. Foolish steps forward to give a jerky bow, Phil offering a small smile at the way Foolish seems nervous right off the bat.

"Your Majesty-" Foolish goes to say, being cut off by Dream, who steps right at him and points an accusing finger right at Phil.

"Where the *hell* is our mom?" Dream practically hisses, Foolish sputtering and smacking a hand into Dream's side. "Your majesty." Dream adds, a bit too bitterly. Foolish smacks him again, and Dream elbows him back, Foolish kicking him harshly in the leg. Phil winces a bit at the way Dream makes a quiet noise of pain, before recovering and giving a stiff bow. Foolish gives a smile as if nothing happened.

Phil feels charmed already by their first impression. (And they really do remind him of his sons, with the silent bickering.)

"Our mom, the royal nurse, uh- Puffy, is she here?" Foolish asks, Dream rubbing at his ankle where Foolish had kicked him. "You sent someone to our house for her. She wasn't supposed to come home today, though, she isn't back at town-"

"She's supposed to come home tomorrow." Dream speaks up, Foolish nodding. "And she's not in the castle, according to what we've heard. So where is she?"

Phil sighs quietly. "To be honest with you both, I don't know."

A beat passes, silence hanging in the room for a moment, and Phil holds his breath, waiting for the outburst.

"What do you mean you don't know-?!" Foolish yells, holding his hands to his head.

"You *lost* her?!" Dream asks, voice baffled.

“Listen-”

“She’s your royal nurse! How could’ve you- She was seen going out of the castle, right? Or was she not?” Dream continues, waving his hands up.

“Yeah! Have you searched around for her, or-”

Phil raises his hands up with a pointed look, and both of them go quiet. “Listen. Things have been hectic around the castle as of late, and I think Puffy might’ve gotten wrapped up in something bigger at hand. We *are* looking for her, alright? But we are also dealing with some current problems that are going on. I’m sure she’ll be found.”

“What problems would be more important than someone under your care going *missing* ?” Foolish asks, reaching out beside him to grab at Dream’s arm. Dream leans into him, just a bit.

“An attempted poisoning at dinner.” Phil responds smoothly, Foolish blinking. “Along with evidence that someone has been trying to break into parts of my castle. Like I said, this is a bit bigger than you might think. It’s not just your mother-”

Phil pauses, feeling a slight rumble underneath his feet, and just before he can say anything Dream grabs Foolish by the shirt and drags him to the floor, yelling- “Get down!”

The walls shake as Phil drops to the ground with them, rushing forward to curl his wings around them both as a knee-jerk instinct. A loud blast can be heard and felt from nearby, and Phil glances overhead, watches as the lights flicker and shake from the impact of whatever’s gone off.

The front doors slam open, guards rushing in as Phil raises his head and turns to them, still knelt down by the ground as another blast rings out.

“Your majesty, are you alright?!” Someone asks, and Phil waves off the concern.

“What’s going on, what was that?” Phil demands, Dream and Foolish whispering to each other with wide eyes.

“Suspected attack, somewhere down by the main halls-” Phil gets as an answer. Of course the details wouldn’t be known if the blast has just barely gone off. Even so, Phil feels a sharp irritation course through him at not knowing what’s going on.

There’s another rumble, truly shaking the walls this time, and Phil can practically feel it. Someone yells down the hall for reinforcements, and Phil takes in a deep breath to calm himself, smelling a bit of smoke.

He rises to his feet, pulling Foolish and Dream up with him. “Alright, get these two away and somewhere safe-” Phil pushes them at the guards, Foolish stumbling as he tries to turn back.

“Wait- what about-” Dream goes to ask, Phil holding onto him by the arm as he leans forward.

“We can continue talking later, but you both need to go.” Phil says, voice holding no room for any argument. “Go, take them.” He says to the guards, and watches as the two brothers are quickly escorted out of the room, down the hall in the opposite way of where the approaching smoke is coming from. Strangely, Phil notes the smoke is a dark, deep red.

Holding a sleeve to his nose, Phil follows them out with guards staying at his sides, trying to make sure Phil won’t be attacked at any time as soon as he glances down towards where the next explosion rings out.

“I want reinforcements towards whoever is making those explosions, and put the castle into lockdown. My sons and the guests are still in the courtyard?” Phil asks, turning his head to look towards one of his guards.

“Yes, your majesty.”

“Move them somewhere secure, keep them there until everything is settled down.” Phil orders, then walks right into the smoke, trying to stifle down the quiet anger that keeps trying to claw its way up. He’s got this. This is under control.

It’s not very under control.

The sorcerer in the hall has a single mission, and that is to create a distraction through as much destruction and fire as possible. Here’s one way to get the Emperors' attention: set his castle ablaze.

This entire task is a bit of a suicide mission, because once the sorcerer is caught, there’s no doubt they’ll be dragged away to never be seen again. So they put everything they’ve got behind their attacks, aim at anything that even moves. The guards can’t get close enough, and the Emperor himself is cowering behind cover, helpless against raging fire that’s starting to spread through the halls.

The smoke is eye-catching and suffocating, deep red choking out anyone close enough, and the flames burning anyone who tries to rush forward. The sorcerer may be surrounded, but what can the royal guards do if they can’t even get close?

A good ten minutes have passed, which might be enough for their plan to at least start settling in place. If everything is going right, the guests of the emperor are currently getting swarmed with their best men, right now.

As for the princes, everyone knows of Techno’s fighting abilities, and the way he and Wilbur can work together as if they read each other’s minds. For that, the simple solution is to just lead them away, for just enough time so that their target can be grabbed and taken down into the stronghold, where they will bargain for the portal in exchange.

It's a rushed plan, and maybe one with too many holes, but it's all they've got, so the sorcerer stays on their feet, and goes to set the ceiling on fire, raising their hands up, feeling their magic crackle and burn at their palms, then-

An arrow whistles through the air, and digs itself right into the sorcerer's hand.

They scream, jerking back and stumbling on their feet a bit as pain flashes through their palm, sharp and unexpected. Whipping their head up, they search for the idiot who's shot it, the person who's gotten the courage to step out of cover under the risk of being burnt to a crisp, just so they could fire an arrow into the sorcerer's hand.

The smoke doesn't quite clear, but it shifts, just enough to make out Phil's face across the hall. His figure is hard to make out, but it's easy to see the bow held in his hands, pulled back with another arrow, and it's easy to see his *eyes*, which are pointed directly onto his target.

His eyes burn with a fury worse than the very flames around the halls, and the sorcerer feels as if maybe, this whole plan was always meant to go sideways.

The princes and the emperor's guests are quickly moved into a secure room the moment it's ordered, and two guards are placed at the door which is the only way in, as always whenever the castle goes on lockdown.

There's not much information as to what is going on, and there's not much that the royal guards can say in response to the princes pestering questions, so the tension in the air is thick as they all sit in the room, silent and waiting.

Niki suggests it's perhaps a physical attack, after the failed poison from earlier. Something of a more drastic approach, since the first attempt went badly. Techno seems to agree with that guess.

Ranboo keeps making quiet little warbling sounds, which is something he always does, but it gets worse whenever he's particularly nervous or upset, like now. Tubbo begins rambling about the time he and Tommy stole a chair from a store, and Tommy bickers with him on the details of the story, their clashing voices being some sort of comfort to the others of the room. It's endearing, in a way, to watch how Tommy and Tubbo butt heads over who exactly grabbed the chair first, because no, Tubbo, it was you, you said you could carry it, you always carry things, Mr. Strong guy-!

Outside, the two guards are caught in a quiet scuffle, apprehended quickly enough, with not enough noise to alert the people inside the room. While the royal guards are dragged off to be hidden somewhere else, decoys are put in place, and one more 'guard' knocks on the door, with their objective being to lead the princes away.

"His majesty is asking for you both." They lie, the room quickly falling silent at the announcement.

Techno glances at Tommy, then looks to Wilbur, the both of them not yet standing to their feet. "Just us?"

"Yes, and urgently." They confirm, and Wilbur frowns, but listens, getting to his feet. After all, if Phil is asking for them during a lockdown, then it must be important, right?

The princes leave the emperor's guests behind.

As soon as they're far enough, that's when they go into the room to go after their target, with the same technique as before. They still have the mask of being one of the royal guards, so it's not hard to ask for Tommy to come along because he's being called for.

Tubbo is a bit stubborn in letting him go, though.

"Only him, I'm afraid." The guard tries to say, Tubbo having none of it and shaking his head, Tommy holding back a laugh when Tubbo grabs onto his arm with a death grip.

“No, I’m going with.” He insists. “Do you have any idea of the shit he’s gotten up to?”

“It wasn’t on purpose-!” Tommy tries to protest.

“Like that matters!”

“We don’t have time for this.” They’re both told, the guard glancing back at the door with a hesitant air to them. They’re here only for Tommy, because they know that he’s the key to the door, one way or another.

It’s a bit hard to do that with Tubbo at his side though.

“His majesty is asking for Tommy and Tommy only.” They stress, Tubbo just waving a hand and not seeming to take the words seriously.

“He can deal with it.” Tubbo deadpans, Ranboo snorting in the back.

“Just let him go.” Niki suggests, seeing nothing wrong. “They’re best friends, I’m sure his majesty will understand. Especially if we’re in such a situation like right now, with the castle on lockdown.”

There’s a beat of silence, the guard looking down towards Tubbo and Tommy, who quietly talk at each other, discussing what Phil would even need from Tommy right now, if he’s asking for him after he asked for the princes.

“Excuse me.” The guard says, tugging gently at Tubbo’s arm, then yanking so hard that he goes tumbling to the floor.

“Tubbo!” Tommy yells, rushing to help, then getting grabbed by the back of his cape, being pulled towards the door. He stumbles, choking a bit with the fabric pulling at him, and both Niki and Ranboo jump to their feet.

“Woah, woah-” Ranboo drops to the ground to help Tubbo up, who stands on his feet with a baffled expression. It quickly turns furious when he realizes Tommy is quite literally being dragged towards the door.

Tommy’s hands fumble at the clasp of his cape, and he’s able to take it off, letting the guard have it as he falls forward, coughing a bit and stumbling towards Tubbo, who grabs Tommy and pulls him away from the door.

The guard steps forward to reach out towards Tommy, and Niki steps in front of them, pushing Tommy and Tubbo to stand behind her. Ranboo stays standing behind all of them, looking over their heads with narrowed eyes.

“What the hell are you doing?!” Niki demands, arms raised out to her sides.

“Don’t fight with us.” The guard warns, and Niki realizes the other guards that were supposed to be protecting them are hovering at the door, only helping the intruder. “Just give the kid over, and you can stay in here.”

“Fuck you!” Tubbo spits out, Tommy rubbing at his throat with an agreeing nod.

“Something is wrong.” Ranboo whispers, and Niki quietly agrees.

“Did Phil actually ask for Tommy?” Niki asks.

“Give the kid to us.” They say again, and there’s weapons in their hands. Before, Niki had been reassured at the fact they were protected with such weapons, but now, they’re pointed right at her.

“Are you even with the Emperor?!” Tommy yells out.

“We don’t have time for this.”

“I’m not giving him over.” Niki grits out, stepping back again, pushing the others to stay behind her. “Don’t you dare take another step, I’m warning you.”

They don’t listen, instead they just raise their weapons, point them right at her face-

“Ranboo, take them both and run!” Niki yells, and she lunges forward with a yell, narrowly avoiding getting stabbed in the shoulder and tackling the guard into the floor.

“Okay, let’s go!” Ranboo steers Tubbo and Tommy to circle around the seats in the room, trying to escape the person that’s gone to chase after them.

“Niki!” Tubbo yells, Tommy swearing loudly as he realizes they’re still trapped in the room, with someone blocking the door.

“Hold on!” Ranboo warns, grabbing them both by the shoulders, and Tommy’s world flashes out for a moment, before coming back, and-

They’re in the hallway, particles floating all around them.

“You can TELEPORT?” Tubbo shrieks, Ranboo just groaning in response, resting his palms on his knees and trying to not puke. Tommy looks behind them and realizes they are not very far, actually, because the room they just came from is right down the hall.

“GO GO GO-!” Tommy yells, pushing them both forward, all three of them frantically running down the hall.

“Why did you never tell me you can *teleport* ?!” Tubbo demands, holding his hands to his head as they all sprint. “THAT’S SOMETHING I SHOULD KNOW!”

“WELL, IT NEVER CAME UP!” Ranboo gives as an answer, throwing his hands up into the air. “And it’s not something I do often! Last time I did it, I got stuck on the roof-”

“Can we *please* focus on the bad guys trying to fucking kidnap me!?” Tommy screams, feeling like that is the main issue at the moment. “Something is very wrong, these people are very much not with Phil, and- ah fuck.” Tommy swears as he realizes there’s people at the end of the hallway, a roadblock to freedom.

They all stumble to stop and turn around, but there’s more people behind them, boxing them in.

“Okay, do it again, do it again!” Tubbo yells, latching onto Ranboo’s arm. Ranboo grabs onto Tommy’s hand, and he listens to Tubbo’s frantic orders, trying to teleport once again, Tommy’s world flashing out for a single moment-

They reappear again a bit down the hall, not nearly far enough. Ranboo pulls his mask down to try and breathe easier, leaning a bit onto Tubbo.

Tommy looks behind him, seeing the bad guys from before rapidly approaching.

“Okay, okay, we need to keep going-” Tommy insists, both him and Tubbo pushing Ranboo to keep walking. “We need to-” Tommy stammers, looking behind him again, heart beating too fast in his chest, as he realizes they’re getting too close and Ranboo looks dangerously close to passing out-

“Alright.” Ranboo chokes out, standing up straighter, and the world blinks out one more time.

They reappear in a room this time, particles flying over their heads, and Tommy shakes his head to try and steady himself, and watches as Ranboo crumples to the ground.

“Ranboo-!” Tubbo yells.

“Shit, shit-!” Both Tommy and Tubbo try to slow his fall, and fail, instead just falling onto the floor with him, all three of them hitting the ground with a thump.

“Ranboo!? Hey!” Tubbo grabs at Ranboo’s face, slapping him a bit. “Wake up! This is not the time!”

“Oh great, he’s dead.” Tommy mutters out, leaning back on his knees with a weary sigh.
“We’re dead.”

“He’s not *dead* .” Tubbo snaps, sounding a bit appalled that Tommy would even suggest such a thing. “And we’re fine, we teleported into-” Tubbo and Tommy look up, observing the room they’ve gotten into, blinking at Dream and Foolish, who look back with varying degrees of confusion.

Chapter End Notes

cha cha real smooth

(another update coming soon, I won't let yall wait as long as you did last time)

also if you saw typos no you didn't

Behind that portal door

Chapter Notes

the speedrunning song was stuck in my heads through the entirety of writing this chapter

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy feels incredibly pissed off with this current turn of events.

He feels rather pissed off on the fact he's apparently being hunted down for who even knows what. Last he checked, he was not a criminal. And he's also pissed off at the two strangers who look at him and Tubbo as if they're insane and they've both come out of *nowhere*- well, actually, they did come out of thin air, didn't they? Maybe the weird looks are sorta justified.

The room they've teleported into is small, something along the lines of a waiting room, almost. It reminds Tommy of the same room he sat in after he climbed out that window the day before. Good memories.

Dream and Foolish are crouched down behind a fancy couch, eyes peeking over at Tommy, who glares back with a burning fury as Tubbo slaps Ranboo across the face to try and wake him up.

"Stop sleeping!" Slap. "We are trying to not have Tommy die-" Slap. "-and you passing out is not helping!" Slap, slap. "Okay, I think he's out cold." Tubbo leans back on his knees, making a cut-throat gesture towards Tommy.

"I thought you said he wasn't dead!" Tommy exclaims. "Why would you go-" He copies Tubbo's gesture by swiping his finger across his throat.

“He’s breathing!” Tubbo throws out, waving vaguely towards Ranboo’s chest, and Tommy buries his face into his hands with a long suffered groan for a moment, then they both raise their heads to Dream and Foolish. Tommy frowns with a grumpy mood, while Tubbo just seems bored.

“Who the hell are you?” Tommy asks dryly, Tubbo glancing down to Ranboo for a moment so he can adjust the other’s mask on his face.

“Who are *you*?” Foolish asks back, raising his head up, and getting yanked back down by Dream. He tumbles down behind the couch with a yell. Dream doesn’t even spare a glance behind him.

“He asked first.” Tubbo insists, pointing a finger towards Tommy.

“He asked second.” Dream responds, and Tommy narrows his eyes. “Where did you even come from?!”

“From outside the room, obviously.” Tommy deadpans.

“You weren’t here a second ago, though!” Foolish blurts out, jumping back up on his feet, Dream turning his head to him. “Magic, right? Are you two magic-users?”

“Nooo…” Tubbo trails off, tilting his head. “-but that does sound pretty cool! He actually got us here, he’s able to teleport, but not often, by the looks of it.” Tubbo says, pointing at Ranboo, who’s still entirely unconscious and sprawled out on the floor.

Dream nods, nudging in Foolish in the shoulder. “Yeah, magic like that would take heaps of energy too quickly. He passes out whenever he overuses his, I bet that’s what happened to your friend.” Foolish makes a little face at Dream, Dream shrugging at him.

“You have magic?!” Tubbo gasps, Tommy jabbing him in the arm. “Ow!”

“Tubbo. People trying to kidnap me. Priorities.” Tommy reminds, Tubbo giving a huff.

“Wait, what?” Dream asks, Tommy paying him no mind.

“We have places to be, men! If you could kindly help us drag our friend outside to somewhere better, that would be nice-”

“Okay-” Tubbo cuts him off, standing up on his feet and brushing off dust from his knees. “I’m Tubbo, the guy who’s passed out on the ground is Ranboo, and this is the soon-to-be prince of the Antarctic Empire, Tommy.”

“*Tubbo*.” Tommy hisses out, face going red as Tubbo just completely ignores his fumbling reaction.

“The emperor only has two sons, though?” Dream asks, Foolish jumping over the couch to give a small bow towards Tommy, who immediately makes a noise as if he’s choking on air.

“Well- I’m Foolish, then, your highness, this is my brother, Dream.” Foolish points back at said brother, who leans against the couch as he stands to his feet.

Tommy sputters as Tubbo grins wide. “Good to meet you. There are currently people in the castle trying to kidnap us.”

“WHAT?!” Dream yells. He goes ignored.

“Oh, that’s not good.” Foolish blinks, Tubbo nodding with a hand held underneath his chin, looking down at Ranboo.

“Well, they’re trying to kidnap Tommy. Not sure what for, this kinda seems a lot worse than it could be at first glance...”

“Wait, Foolish.” Dream says, quickly making his way around the couch to stand at Foolish’s side, grabbing onto his arm. “Do you think this could be connected with mom?” Foolish’s eyes go wide.

“Okay, Tommy, you take his legs, and I’ll grab his arms, and then we pull-” Tubbo says, grabbing at Ranboo’s hands and holding them up.

“So! Funny story. Me and Dream, we’re here because our mother went missing.” Foolish cuts in, Tommy dropping Ranboo’s legs, wincing a bit as they hit the floor with a thump.

“That’s unfortunate!” Tubbo responds, pulling and dragging Ranboo’s body across the ground towards the door. Foolish and Dream step back, watching him pass.

“We went to speak to the emperor about it. He said she might’ve gotten caught in something that’s going on around the castle, so maybe our issues are connected?” Dream asks, Tommy rushing to follow after Tubbo and Ranboo.

“Could be...” Tubbo nods, Tommy opening the door and peeking out into the hallway warily, keeping an eye out for anyone. “I guess we can help each other then. We left someone behind in the chaos, her name is Niki. Uh, we’re hoping she’s where we left her, she kinda is the reason we were able to get away.”

“Do you even know who’s after you?” Dream asks, Tubbo pursing his lips for a moment before shaking his head.

“Nope! Traitors to the crown, probably.”

“Tubbo, I think the hallway is on fire.” Tommy mutters, before making a noise of surprise and running out through the door. “The hallway *is* on fire-! Niki!” He runs outside, right

towards Niki, who runs away from the fire that she may or may not have started.

Tubbo practically rips the doors open wide in order to run after Tommy, stumbling in his steps as he finds Niki checking Tommy over, relief washing over her as she sees Tubbo as well.

“Niki!” Tubbo grins, meeting her halfway and being pulled into a hug. “You smell like smoke and that’s awfully suspicious.”

“Nevermind that, I had to just make a bit of a distraction. I’m hoping Phil won’t be too mad about me setting his castle on fire.” Niki laughs nervously, shaking her head. “Where’s Ranboo? Is he okay?”

“He passed out on the fucking floor!” Tommy yells, running past them both, running back into the room where Foolish is poking at Ranboo to see if he’s going to wake up anytime soon. Dream stands over him with crossed arms, seeming more confused if anything. “Also these are friends, Foolish, Dream, this is Niki. Niki, this is Foolish, Dream.”

“Hello.”

“Hi.”

“And can we trust them?” Niki asks, voice deadly sharp as she narrows her eyes towards them both, and Foolish raises his hands up in surrender, Dream taking a step back to almost hide behind Foolish. “You aren’t with the people who are trying to hurt us?”

“No, ma’am?” Foolish blurts out, face nervous. “Actually, we’re, uh-”

Dream leans around over his shoulder, continuing for him. “We’re looking for our mom. She’s the royal nurse here-”

“Puffy?” Niki blinks. “Oh, wait, you’re Puffy’s sons? Then why are you-?”

“You know our mom?” Foolish questions.

“Through mention...” Niki waves off, kneeling down to Ranboo to check if he’s alright. “It’s fine, let’s just get going. I’m sure Puffy is in the castle somewhere, we should get to Phil to see what’s going on.” Niki gently slaps Ranboo on the side of the face, Ranboo’s head just turning to the side limply.

“Hey, Niki, did you by any chance lose the people who were following you?” Tommy asks, squinting down the hall with a frown.

“I hope I did?” Niki asks, gesturing for Foolish to help with carrying Ranboo. They settle for Foolish carrying him on his back. “I hoped the fire was enough to distract them.”

“Okay, well, it wasn’t-” Tommy screams as something bright gets fired his way, and a small explosion of light goes off in the hallway. “We have company!”

“Get inside the room!” Tubbo screams, yanking Tommy by the arm to pull him to cover.

“We can’t stay in here! Isn’t the hallway on fire?!” Foolish protests, lifting Ranboo up on his back.

“That is true, the smoke might be harmful if we stick around.” Niki agrees.

“Okay, then, everyone start running!” Tubbo yells, and he practically pushes Dream out into the hallway, then drags Tommy along by the hand. Niki and Foolish follow quickly as another blast of magic comes flying across the hall, through the smoke.

Something is *off* about this particular royal guard.

It could be Wilbur being paranoid, or it could be something of concern, and with each passing moment, Wil feels more and more convinced it's the latter. This person just seems too *nervous*. Constantly checking around the halls in case they run into anyone else. Constantly checking behind to make sure Techno and Wil are still following behind.

And while it's literally part of the job description to be vigilant of the castle and of their surroundings, the way this person does it is just suspicious.

And Wilbur has no clue as to where they're being led.

Techno tilts his head towards Wilbur, Wilbur glancing back with raised eyebrows. Techno nods at the armor their escort is wearing, Wilbur gives a matching nod in response.

'Things have been strange around the castle lately' Techno almost seems to say, his words wrapped up in his expression.

'Traitor, perhaps?' Wilbur seems to respond, humming as he considers the idea.

They both stop at the exact same time, steps coming to an abrupt halt.

"Excuse me." Wilbur says, watching as their escort quickly makes a backtrack upon realizing both of them have just stopped in the middle of the hallway.

"Your highness."

"I'm sorry if this is an inconvenience, it's just- Things have been going on around the castle, and me and my brother, we're a bit wary, you know?" Wilbur asks, keeping his voice light.

“Do you think you could give us something to prove we can trust you?”

“Your highness, of course you can trust me. My duty is to protect the royal family, and I assure you, I’m leading you to your father right now.”

“And what’s our father doing right now? Why does he need us?” Techno asks, raising his eyebrows.

“Well-” The guard hesitates, before nodding slowly. “There has...been an attack, on the castle. And he wishes to know if you are both alright.”

“That’s not within the usual procedure.” Wilbur frowns. “Is the castle on lockdown?”

“I...believe so?”

“Then we shouldn’t be out here.” Technoblade says. “And we definitely wouldn’t be escorted to Phil, he comes to *us* after castle lockdowns.”

The guard blinks at them, mouth opening and closing, before saying nothing. Then, suddenly, they reach for their sword, and Techno kicks them right in the chest, sending them flying backwards. They slam onto their back, trying to sit up, and Wilbur kicks them across the face. Techno reaches down to pull the sword away from them as they hold their rapidly bleeding nose.

“You may be wearing the empire’s armor, but you don’t seem to be loyal to it.” Technoblade mutters, observing the sword in his hands and pointing it at the person on the floor. “Talk.”

“You broke my nose!”

“I’ll break your *arm* if you don’t tell me who you are and what you were trying to do.” Wilbur spits out, and Technoblade holds onto the back of Wilbur’s shirt to make sure he

won't be lunging forward anytime soon. "Tell me now. What were you trying to do?"

"I was trying to lead you away!"

"*Why?*" Wilbur demands, and the guard spills with Techno pointing a sword at their forehead. In a matter of minutes, they stutter and ramble about the plan regarding the portal, about Tommy about leading both of them away, because they would be roadblocks to the plan.

They learn that Tommy's the target here, not just the target, the key for the real goal.

They're after the portal.

They're trying to use Tommy to get to the End portal.

Wilbur kicks the guy across the face again to knock him out, and he turns to Techno with a fearful expression. "We need to go back."

"What about Phil?" Technoblade says. "He might not know there's traitors in the castle."

"*Shit.*" Wilbur swears, running his hands through his hair. "Okay. I'll make my way to Phil. You run back, try and protect Tommy."

"Are you sure?" Technoblade asks, giving the sword over to Wilbur, who takes it with steady hands. "I don't want you to-"

"I can fucking handle myself, Technoblade!"

"I was more worried about you committing a murder on the way to dad."

Wilbur blinks, then gives an abrupt laugh. “I’ll be fine. Hurry, go, be careful, be safe-”

“Just run, Wil.” Techno says, and they split, Wilbur going towards the front of the castle, where he hopes Phil could be, and Techno running back to where they came from.

Even with the fire being a good distraction, it doesn’t seem like it did much. By the time they’ve run away, it seems like the fire was forcefully snuffed out, no longer a raging flame, but rather a smoldering pile of ash scattered across the halls.

Tommy and Tubbo were leading the group to quickly run, but with blasts being thrown their way, and multiple people on their tail, things went sideways.

Dream doesn’t exactly know how, but one moment, they were all trying to turn the corner, run from the blast of magic being shot at them, and the next, there was the shatter of glass at their feet, unknown potions splashing across the floor, and the world blanked out for a moment.

He had gotten the least of it, it seems, because he was only out for a minute, and when he comes to, he finds everyone else sprawled out on the ground, with unfamiliar voices talking with a panicked tone over his head.

“Hurry up, take the kid-!”

“I’m trying! This other one won’t let go of his hand- god, they’re like- an octopus!”

“Do I need to tell you to hurry again?! These potions are weak, this is only going to last for a few minutes, at least, we need to move!”

Dream turns his head to the side, feeling sluggish like he's just woken up rather early in the morning. He can see Foolish beside him, knocked out. "Foosh?" Dream mumbles, reaching a hand out to shake him awake, and he hears footsteps leaving. He looks up, eyes wide, and realizes-

They're taking Tommy.

"Hey!" Dream yells, slamming his hands onto the ground and pushing himself up, then breaking out into a sprint. "Get back here!"

There's still a few people scattered around from the chase before, and Dream ignores the people trying to step in his way, trying to slow him down.

"Stop!" Dream yells, running and sliding across the floor as someone tries to stop him with outstretched hands. A smash of a glass bottle follows behind him, and Dream holds his breath and runs faster.

It's a good thing that Dream's hobby these days is a competitive game of 'tag'. He's used to people trying to catch him or slow him down, so it's laughably easy to dodge out of the way, slip out of their range, and at one point he even runs across the wall to avoid a few people in his way.

He can see Tommy just up ahead, being held over someone's shoulder, and he watches as they go through a heavy door, slamming it shut behind them. Dream skids to a stop, slamming his fists against the wood, then yanking at the handles, slowly pulling it open with a grunt.

Dream goes to run in, but he stops, hesitating at the fact the door leads to a set of stairs, where the light goes dim and the walls turn into stone.

This doesn't seem good, but Dream will be damned if he just lets these people get away with a kid.

Running down the steps, Dream's careful to not trip and fall, and he finds himself going down a hallway, with multiple paths to take.

Fantastic. So it's a maze? He's never been too great with directions.

Dream sighs, and decides to go left, because he's wasting time by just standing still. He runs through, cupping his hands around his mouth and yelling Tommy's name, hoping the kid has woken up already so he can call back. The person had said before the potion would only last for a short while. Surely, that means Tommy will wake up soon?

"TOMMY!" Dream yells, running past cells, now, and he glances at the bars with a curious thought. Most of the cells are empty, hardly used with dust all over, and Dream wonders if the Emperor has ever used these-

"Duckling?" Dream hears, and he stops so suddenly that he nearly trips over his own feet. He stumbles, whipping his head around with wide eyes, and he immediately backtracks, Tommy no longer being a priority with the sound of his mom's voice. "Over here!" Puffy calls, and Dream sees a hand wave out from the bars.

Dream runs, fast as he can, and he practically runs into the metal bars upon seeing Puffy on the other side. "Mom!"

"Dream-?!" Puffy grabs at his arms, practically trying to hug him through the bars. Dream takes a step back, pushing his mask up over his face so she can see him properly, and he looks at the bars to immediately try and figure out a way to get her out. "What are you *doing* here-?!"

"Me and Foolish got word that you weren't at the castle- long story short, I was chasing these guys who stole a kid-"

"Tommy?" Sam says, and Dream jolts, only now realizing there's someone else in the cell with Puffy. "Shit, no, they have-?"

“How do I get you out of here?” Dream asks, completely ignoring him. He pulls at the cell door, looking around for maybe some keys that could be hanging on a nearby wall. But no luck. “I’ll get you out, hold on, I- just let me-”

“Go get Foolish- no, go get Phil! Dream, these are bad people wanting to break into something very important, you need to go get someone-”

“I’m not leaving you here!” Dream protests. “Give me a second, I can-!”

“You’re not going to get me out just on your own. Believe me, I’ve been tugging on that door for a while.”

Dream huffs, yanking his mask back over his face with more force than needed. Puffy reaches out to grab him by the hands.

“Go to Phil, tell him that there are people locked away down here, and tell him that the traitors in the castle are after the portal. And-” Puffy hesitates, looking down the hallway to where Dream was running. “Tell him they have Tommy.”

“Do you even know who that kid is?”

“Somewhat. Go.”

Dream stays for a moment, just holding onto Puffy’s hands, then he runs, sprinting down the hallway to where he came from, and leaving her and Sam behind. This time, Puffy is glad to know she’ll be out eventually. Although, she’s a little scared as to how Phil is going to react to such a message.

By the time Dream gets back, Techno's arrived to the others, helping them up from the ground, and warding off any other traitors who want to mess with them. There's no need, though. The attack on them has stopped, since Tommy's already been taken.

When Dream breaks the news, it takes both him, Foolish, and Niki to stop Tubbo from running off and trying to get to Tommy himself.

Phil takes a deep breath in as he ignores the current screaming and fire that's getting thrown his general direction, and he stays ducked behind cover, his bow held tightly in his hands, an arrow ready to be pulled back and fired.

The moment he shot that arrow into the sorcerer's hand, they had been furious, screaming and yelling and sending fire every single direction.

Luckily, Phil already has his own men working on containing the fire in this singular hall. There's no hope for the walls here, which are already burnt to a crisp, but at least the fire won't be spreading to the rest of the castle anytime soon.

The fire stops for a bit, just a moment, and Phil acts quickly, nocking an arrow and standing onto his feet, stepping around the corner and letting loose the arrow the moment he sees the person he needs to shoot.

It lands right into their leg, and more fire comes towards Phil's direction. He goes back to cover.

They're tiring themselves out. With all the magic they're using, and Phil's accurate shots, this should be over quickly. Either they'll fall over from exhaustion, or Phil's going to land another arrow into their other leg.

“DAD!” Phil hears, and his grip on his bow goes loose as he whips his head towards the other end of the hall he’s taking cover in.

Wilbur runs forward, a crowd of guards following at his heels. Obviously, they’re trying to keep him safe, but Wilbur’s always been one to run away from his guards, especially when he wants to go do something else.

Phil stands to his feet with a worried expression, holding his hands out as Wilbur stops in front of him, panting as he had been running as fast as he could.

“What the hell are you doing here?” Phil hisses out, grabbing at Wilbur’s arms. “Is something wrong- Are you alright-?”

“They’re after Tommy!” Wilbur cuts him off, voice frantic, and Phil goes still. “There’s traitors in the castle, there’s people who are pretending to be guards-”

The fire stops, for just a moment, the sorcerer catching their breath, trying to charge up.

Phil grits his teeth, lets go of Wilbur, and he takes three steps back, fires the shot without a single scrap of hesitation. He doesn’t go to watch and see if it hit, he only goes back to put his attention onto Wilbur again. And he knows he didn’t miss, from the way the sorcerer cries out.

They’ve fallen to the ground, shot right in the shoulder, and that’s when guards start swarming in, apprehending them within moments, dodging the bursts of fire still weakly being thrown out.

Wilbur continues without a hitch, stepping forward to stay close to Phil. “-one of them tried to lead me and Techno somewhere, Technoblade went back to try and help the others-”

“Are you okay?” Phil asks, putting his bow to hang on his arm, holding onto Wilbur by the shoulders. “You both were alright?”

“We’re fine.” Wilbur shakes his head. “It was just one person, me and Techno had it.”

Phil still frowns. A lot of his usual guards aren’t at their posts, because it’s a all hands on deck type of situation with the hall being set on fire. Right now, it’s gotten under control though, right now, the threat is taken care of, but-

“But they’re after-?” Phil pauses, face falling into something furious, but he wrangles it back, shaking his head, yelling out to the people around him. “Okay, I need people to quickly come with me! There’s traitors in the ranks, I want you all to be vigilant! Take off your helmets and-” Phil falters in his words, looking past Wilbur. “Oh.” He breathes out.

Wilbur turns around, eyes wide, both him and Phil rushing forward to where Techno is quickly walking towards them, leading a small crowd around him. Dream’s carrying Foolish on his back, at Dream’s insistence, and Ranboo’s being carried on Techno’s back, still entirely knocked out. Tubbo’s holding onto Ranboo’s hand with Niki following at his heels, and when Tubbo looks up at Phil, it’s with such a fury that Phil feels like *he* might’ve done something wrong. He wonders if Tubbo’s family has a thing with incredibly threatening glares.

Phil searches over all off them for injuries, and his heart drops as he realizes he doesn’t see Tommy walking with them.

“They have Tommy.” Tubbo practically hisses out as they approach, confirming Phil’s worst fear.

Techno elaborates. “There’s traitors in the castle, mostly in the stronghold. Dream says there’s people locked in the cells in there, and they have Tommy, probably to...bargain. Phil, they want to go after the portal.”

They want to-?

Of course.

Of *course*, the portal was what they're after. And of course, they want to use Tommy for their ticket inside. Who knows *why* they want to go in, there's always rumors circling that portal and what's really on the other side. Sometimes people think Phil's hiding something in there, they think he's hiding power, riches, or they just think they have the right to enter the portal themselves.

That portal is not for others to go through, though. Phil has made sure of it. That is what his whole kingdom was built off of, protecting that portal, keeping others away from it.

And now, someone's successfully pissed him off entirely, one, by daring to try and get to that goddamned portal, daring to try and pull a stunt so they can get access to it. And two, taking Tommy as a bargaining chip.

Phil bites his tongue to keep calm, taking a deep breath.

"Alright." Phil says gently, giving a small nudge to Wilbur beside him as he speaks to both Techno and Wil. "All of you, go to the infirmary. I'll order for repair and clean-up to start while you all rest. I'll go to the stronghold to deal with this. I might be away for a bit." He says the last part specifically to his sons.

Wilbur stares at Phil, stammering a bit with his response. "Oh, you're going- Alright. Do you...do you think you'll be gone for a while?"

"Not too long, mate." Phil smiles. "All of you, go rest, recover. Puffy is in the stronghold?" He asks towards Dream, and he nods. "I'll send her up. Maybe she can help out after she's recovered herself."

With that, he walks past them, calling for people to assist to go down to the stronghold, and Tubbo turns to him with a worried face.

"Wait, you're just going to go to them?"

“I’m going to *bargain*, mate.” Phil answers, but he said the word as if it means a little more than that. Tubbo watches as Phil walks down the hall, and then their little group is pushed away to go towards the infirmary, as the halls around them are filled with people immediately working to fix the parts of the castle that have gotten burnt.

Tommy opens his eyes to find himself not where he was before, and he gets pulled onto his feet with strangers he doesn’t know.

Obviously, he acts accordingly.

By screaming and kicking and being a general nuisance. He gets smacked across the head twice for his efforts, and just as he’s trying to bite the hand that’s holding on tightly to his shoulder, he hears footsteps approaching.

A lot. Of footsteps.

Guards, plenty of them, swarming in and blocking off any exits from where they are. There’s a big door behind Tommy, something heavy looking and strong, but Tommy doesn’t think the bad guys are going to be escaping through that anytime soon.

Tommy looks around with as much struggle as he can, and he goes limp when he sees Phil step out from the crowd around them, standing just a few feet away, in front of Tommy.

“Hey, mate.” Phil says, but it’s to Tommy alone. “Are you alright?” He asks, and Tommy takes note of the slight ache on the back of his head, the exhaustion he feels for the adrenaline in his veins, the general fact he’s being held hostage at the moment. He shrugs.

“I assume you’re here to bargain.” The person holding onto Tommy says, and Phil looks up from Tommy with a huff.

“No. I’m here to arrest you all for the crimes you’ve committed against the Antarctic Empire.” Phil delivers smoothly.

“And what makes you think we would just surrender?” Tommy gets tugged backwards. “We have him.”

“You’re surrounded.” Phil simply says, and all at once, the guards raise their weapons, sharp points of spears, the tips of nocked arrows being aimed at the traitors standing in front of the door. A few of them raise their hands in response, magic humming, and shields are raised in preparation, waiting.

Phil just stays standing still.

The person who’s holding onto Tommy looks around with wide eyes, fear rippling across their face as they realize their accomplices truly are surrounded, and they look straight into Phil’s eyes, seeing the burning threat behind them.

And a knife gets pulled.

“Get back!” They yell, Tommy making a strangled noise as he’s yanked backwards by the collar, a knife held close to his face. He looks at it with wide eyes, holding his hands up as if he’ll be able to grab it. “All of you get back, or the kid gets it!”

“If you harm him at *all*-”

“You think we don’t know how important this child is? We know.”

Tommy breathes heavily, looking at Phil, and Phil narrows his eyes. “Know...what?”

“Don’t act stupid! We know your secret.” Tommy grits his teeth as the knife is held too close to his throat, and he refrains from making any noise.

Phil tilts his head to the side, just barely. “And what secret would that be?”

“He’s your son.” The knife is pulled away enough for Tommy to breathe, finally, but Tommy doesn’t take much of a deep breath, because he’s mostly in shock over the bullshit that person has just said. “It’s obvious! You’ve kept him a secret for so long, but now the secret is out. We know the truth, and if you want your blood-born son back, then you will grant us access to the portal.”

Tommy sputters a bit as Phil holds his hands out, face turning into something confused. “He’s not my son.” *Yet*, he can’t help but add in his head. “I’ve never had children of my own.”

“No need to hold on to your lies.” And the knife is back, suffocating and honestly, really annoying at this point. Tommy closes his eyes with a huff. “Or do you want his blood on your hands?”

“Enough, enough.” Phil pleads. “I understand, alright? You let him go, and I’ll open that portal for you.”

“Open it now, and then we’ll let him go.”

“How can you guarantee me his safety?”

“As long as the portal is open and free for us to go through, then we’ll let your son go.”

Tommy’s face scrunches up into- *something*, at being called Phil’s son, and there may be a knife to his throat, and he’s currently being held as a hostage over what has to be the literal

end portal, but even with that, there's a swell of emotion that rises up in his chest at the pure thought of Phil being family.

This is *really* not the time.

He opens his eyes hesitantly to find Phil looking right at him, concern and worry on his face, aimed at Tommy and Tommy alone. His hands are still raised out, as if he's about to try and lunge forward to try and grab Tommy away, but he doesn't take a single step.

"Phil." Tommy chokes out, and Phil's face crumples into something devastated.

"It's alright, Tommy. You'll be alright." He reassures, his words steady and comforting, and when he turns his attention up at his captors, Tommy watches as his eyes go from something kind and caring to downright cruel. His expression is cold, freezing cold, just like the empire he rules over. "If you give him over now, I promise to you all, you won't be imprisoned." They won't be imprisoned, no, Phil can promise a fate much worse than just imprisonment.

"Last warning." Is all Phil gets as a response, and Tommy's eyes go wide as he feels a sharp sting on his neck-

"Okay!" Phil yells, taking a step forward. "Alright. Please."

"Tell your men to stand down!" Someone to Tommy's left yells, and Tommy doesn't dare turn his head to even see which idiot it is, instead, he just keeps his eyes on Phil, keeps himself perfectly still so that blade won't be hurting him any farther.

"Stand down." Phil says, nearly instantaneous, and Tommy watches with a quiet panic as they listen. "Can I open the door, then?"

"Wait-" Tommy says, grabbing at the wrist hovering in front of him, and he's pulled to the side as Phil walks past him. "Wait, Phil, no-!"

“Shut up.” Tommy is told from the person holding him, and Phil pauses and goes very, very still, before raising a hand up to the door that’s blocking off the portal.

It’s cold against Phil’s fingertips, freezing cold, and yet as he goes to push against it, the door starts to dimly glow, growing warmer and warmer until it’s nearly burning. The dungeon they’re all standing in is filled with a purple light, coming from the door in front of Phil. Tommy flicks his eyes to the ground, looking at Phil’s shadow that stretches across the stone floor, the outline of his wings visible against the light.

There’s a quiet yet audible *click* and *hiss* of the door as some sort of lock is turned, and Phil pushes again, this time with the doors opening. They swing open silently, not a single creak or groan, and there’s a faint incoherent whispering that escapes from the newly opened room, along with quiet rumbling being sent through the air. Tommy can’t see past the door from his angle, but he can practically imagine the portal right there, humming with magic he’s never seen before.

“There.” Phil says, turning his eyes onto the traitors. “Now let him go.”

“Let us see the portal for ourselves. We don’t want you to be turning it off or anything along those lines.”

Phil doesn’t seem to be agreeing with that, scowling with a deep frustration in his eyes, but he steps to the side anyway, holding an arm out. “Go on, then. It’s in there, see it for yourself.”

The hand on Tommy’s shoulder goes painfully tight, and he stumbles as he’s suddenly pulled towards the doorway, the knife still hovering around his face.

“Woah, woah-” Tommy tries to step away, getting pushed forward roughly once more.

“Wait-!”

“What are you-” Phil goes to protest, his voice falling into a panic as he tries to lunge towards Tommy, getting cut off with multiple weapons pointed in his direction. He kicks someone in the chest, tries to get past, and is forced to stop with the edge of a blade nearly an inch away from his cheek. “Stop!”

“He can inspect it for us.” Tommy hears, and hands grab at his arms as he tries to kick away, dragging his shoes across the stone to attempt some form of escape. “We have no guarantee you won’t attack us once we go through. So he’s coming along.”

“You put him through that portal, and you are giving up your lives!” Phil yells, wings stretching out behind him as his anger simmers into a roaring flame. “I’ll make all of you *regret* it-!”

“Phil!” Tommy yells, now truly struggling, using his weight and not bothering to even walk, trying to drop to the floor so he won’t be brought any closer to the portal before him. It’s humming with magic, whispering voices floating all around, and in a way, Tommy feels drawn towards it. But he also wants nothing more than to not be pushed through that black void. “Get the fuck off me! Let go, I’m not going in! PHIL!”

Something gets slammed into the back of Tommy's head, and it’s a sharp pain that makes his vision blink out for a bit as he’s quite literally dragged across the stone floor. He hears Phil’s voice faintly behind him, sharp and pissed off, and when Tommy is able to pull his eyes open again, there’s a pitch black void right in front of him.

Tommy stares into the portal with wide eyes, his heart racing in his chest and pounding in his ears as he looks upon the gateway to the end. It looks unreal, it looks like a piece of the night sky placed right before Tommy’s feet, and for a split moment, Tommy really wants to jump in.

Then he gets a hold of himself, screaming and trying to lean back, whipping his head around to turn towards Phil, who’s grappling for someone’s weapon, trying to push them out of the way to the waiting guards that are apprehending anyone as fast as possible. It’s a commotion of yelling and swinging weapons, magic being thrown through the air, colorful blasts exploding too close to Phil, like fireworks that could burn him.

Phil gets thrown to the floor with the blast of it, his wings stretching out as he pushes himself up, then grabs a spear off the ground, and stabs someone right in the shoulder with it. He kicks them away, turns and goes straight for the portal room with a deadly look that makes even Tommy slightly fearful for his life.

“Shit- go, go-!” Yells get thrown out as Phil tackles another person to the ground, the traitors quickly being picked off within moments, and Tommy tries to escape in the chaos, tries to squeeze through and run away from the portal behind him. He gets pushed back with a high pitched scream, and the person in front of him holds onto his shirt, keeping Tommy leaning dangerously over the portal.

“TOMMY!” Phil yells, slamming someone into the ground with his foot, and Tommy’s fairly sure he heard a crack.

“Get back, or I’ll let go!”

“Give him over *right now*-”

“I’ll drop him-!”

“You’re already surrounded! Most of your group was just apprehended within moments, what makes you think you’ll last if you drop him through?!”

There’s a sudden pause, and Tommy grips onto the hand on his shirt for dear life, trying to heave his head up so he can look past Phil to the guards that were fighting just a minute before. The fighting has come to a sudden stop, and he can see a few unconscious people being dragged away. Not surprising, with the amount of guards stifling their numbers. But even so, that doesn’t take care of the three left standing in the portal room. The one who’s still holding onto Tommy, one standing beside them, and the other is standing on the portal’s stairs, looking down at Phil with a stance that screams ‘vulnerable’.

A small drop of relief finds its way into Tommy’s heart, and he lets out a quiet sigh. Phil is right. They got this far, but they were overtaken within moments. The only smart choice would be to hand Tommy over, and end it right here.

“We have gotten this far.” One of them says, nearly hissing at Phil with frustration and anger in one. “And we know you hide something in the End.”

“What is inside the End is none of your business.”

“You are hiding something from your people, aren’t you?”

Phil’s lips curl into a thin smile. “Be honest. What makes you think a man like me wouldn’t go without a few secrets?”

“That’s true.” A pause. “I think it’s time we bring some of those secrets to light.”

Tommy skids the top of his shoes against the portal to try and climb up, and his heart nearly stops as the hand holding him up goes slack.

He gets let go.

“No-!”

“Phil-!” Tommy screams, trying to grab out onto something so he can pull himself up, stop himself from falling back, but there’s nothing to hold onto, and his world tilts. His voice disappears as he falls into the black void, and his outstretched hands disappear as he’s pushed through the door into another realm. A soft *woosh* is heard through the air, and then it’s quiet, Tommy gone.

Phil reaches a hand out, being far too late, and his breath is stolen from his lungs as Tommy’s voice is suddenly cut off from falling through.

The entire room, the entire crowd seems to have gone entirely silent, so quiet that you can hear a pin drop, and no one dares to move. The traitors that are left standing eye the guards behind Phil with a confused look, and they seem even more perplexed when the guards just step back, away from the door. Phil drops his hand to his side, quiet.

Something in Phil *snaps*.

“Fine.” Phil breathes out. “Fine, then. You want to see what’s past the portal? I’ll fucking *show* you.”

And with that, the door behind Phil slam closed with a bright glow, locking the traitors inside with him.

Going through the portal is nothing like Tommy has ever experienced.

It’s a rush of pressure and noise in his ears along with feeling too cold and yet too warm at the same time, and Tommy feels thrown off balance, feels panicked and confused, and then he lands.

He’s spat out onto solid ground, sprawled out in a heap of shaking limbs, and Tommy gasps for air, groans as he tries to shake out the dizzy feeling in his head. He doesn’t move for a solid few seconds, instead just trying to take a grasp of his physical state, before looking up and seeing where exactly he is.

Tommy looks up, and looks right off the edge of the platform he’s on, face first with the pitch black void, endless and utterly terrifying.

He screams, scooting back away from it, and turning around to see if that’s all that surrounds him, just the void and the endless drop into a surely painful death. It’s not just the void, though.

There's a pathway, a stone pathway that looks sturdy and also out of place, and it leads to the only other thing that's in the End.

The island.

Tommy almost wants to smack himself in the face. Of course, the island is here! He remembers what Techno and Wilbur said, the pillars of obsidian, the dragon that Phil killed, the-

Tommy pauses. And the portal that leads back! It should be here, shouldn't it? He doesn't want to stay here longer than necessary.

Tommy drags himself off the ground, standing on shaky feet, and he breaks into a sprint across the bridge of stone, making his way to the centerpiece of the End realm. He can see the pillars from here, towering high over his head, and his gaze goes up, up, then stops at the very top as he sees some sort of light coming from the tip of it.

A beam of light, it seems, moving slowly through the sky, like some sort of strange lighthouse. Tommy slows in his steps as he walks onto the edge of the island, the ground underneath him thankfully solid and farther away from that dark void below.

A beacon? That's what it seems like, at first, but it's not quite that. The beam of light continues to move, and Tommy follows it up into the dark sky, noting that there's no stars here, in the End.

He squints up at the sky for a moment, seeing nothing past the darkness of it, and he looks back down to the ground, seeing the portal far off, at the center of the island. Just as he's about to run towards it, there's a yell coming from behind him.

"Tommy!" Phil's voice calls out, and Tommy spins around, face lighting up in relief as Phil comes from where he just ran from, his wings splayed out as he runs across the bridge of

stone. There's two people behind him, but they're on the ground, seeming to be in pain from the landing.

Tommy opens his mouth to yell back to Phil, and he's cut off with the sound of a rumbling *roar* from far over his head. An animalistic screech, echoing out across the void, and Tommy's eyes go wide as his heart drops, disbelief and bafflement filling up his head.

Phil's taken to flying, now, and he practically slams into Tommy, arms wrapping around him as Tommy screams from being swept off his feet, carried through the air for just a moment.

"Stay close to me, do you understand-?" Phil is saying, landing back on the ground and running on his feet, but still holding Tommy like a lifeline. There's blood on his sleeves, and Tommy would usually be worried about that, but he's more worried about the *noise* that just came from the dark over his head.

"What *was* that?!" Tommy demands, another deafening roar echoing out, and Tommy wraps his arms around Phil's neck, holding on for dear life. He glances back at the stone bridge Phil's just came from, and he finds those two other people following behind, the ones that had pushed Tommy through. Where did the third one go, Tommy wonders.

Phil comes to a sudden stop, turning around to face the people giving chase, and he gives a withering glare with Tommy held tightly in his arms.

"The crystals-!" One of them say, both of them coming to a stop to gasp at the new environment around them. Phil glances up towards one of the towers. "They're intact?"

"All of them, they're- That shouldn't be possible."

"You wanted to see what was in the End." Phil calls out, taking a few steps back as two heads turn towards him. "Here it is."

A loud roar rings out once again, much closer than before, and Tommy tries his best to hide into Phil's shirt, eyes wide as he can *feel* the sound practically vibrate across his skin. There's a gush of wind blown towards them, and Phil's hair flies back as he lifts his gaze up with a grin.

Tommy stares with pure disbelief as he hears the flap of a dragon's wings, and he can see the silhouette of the ender dragon flying above them, circling around in the sky.

"Is that-" Tommy stammers out, a million questions filling his head, because no, the story he was always told, the story he always heard throughout the kingdom was that the dragon was *dead*. The dragon is gone, and it's been gone since long before Tommy was even born. And yet-

"It can't be!" One of the traitors scream, stumbling back in fear.

"The dragon is alive." The other one says, voice purely baffled. "The dragon is-?!"

"You lied! You lied, didn't you!?" Their partner suddenly yells, and Phil huffs at the words. "This is what you were hiding, this is what you kept from your people! Your entire kingdom is built off a lie, you never killed the dragon like you said!"

"My kingdom isn't built off a lie." Phil answers smoothly, not denying that last part. "People came here for my protection, and that's what it's always been. I've always protected the portal for a reason."

Everyone in the kingdom, everyone in the castle, everyone that Phil's ever met, they all think the same thing. All the books are written the same, all the stories and tales. Phil went to the end, killed the dragon, and then protected the portal so that no one would ever have to go back to a void where so many died.

It's not the actual story.

Phil protects the portal, that much is true, but as for the reason why?

Only Phil and his two sons actually know what happened. Phil only told what actually happened once, and once only, in quiet whispers, Technoblade and Wilbur listening with wide eyes when they had been younger.

Phil never killed the dragon.

He fought it, he remembers that. He nearly killed it, nearly did what the tales say, after a battle that took him days of struggle. He had that chance. He had it right in arms reach, he could've killed the dragon if he wished, he could've made it so those tales were *true* .

He never brought down that axe the way he should have, though.

Instead, he did all he could to heal what he did, and he made a friend.

Tommy screams as the dragon comes to land beside Phil, the impact shaking the ground underneath Phil's feet. Phil raises his head with a laugh as the dragon huffs towards his direction, getting close and trying to see what exactly Phil is holding in his arms.

"This one's family, mate." Phil says gently, watching as the dragon's tail curls around them, practically shielding him from sight of their other company. "Those two *aren't*."

Phil raises a hand towards the direction of the two traitors who had the misfortune to follow Phil into this world, and they watch with terrified faces as the dragon turns its head towards them with a rumbling growl. Phil smiles, and keeps his finger pointed right at them as they turn and try to run, a futile attempt at escape.

Purple fire shoots out from the throat of a protective dragon, and Phil turns away from the heat, and holds onto Tommy as the traitors are burnt up in flames.

Chapter End Notes

that was fun to write >:P

(also omg, this chapter is like 8k words, WOOOO)

hope you enjoyed

A new friend, I think

Chapter Notes

dedicated to dessa :P

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Anyone who ventures into the end never comes back.

Phil knows that fact very well. It's been told to him plenty of times as he searched for the portal, people trying to change his mind, make him turn back. Phil will only smile and gently insist, because even with all the warnings in the world, there is nothing that can snuff out the burning fire of determination that sits in his soul.

"Ender pearls?" The shopkeeper asks, Phil standing beside the counter, a dark green hood over his head. There are no wings on his back, no crown on his head. Phil, at this moment, is not an emperor, nor a dragon slayer, or even a father. He is only an adventurer with a death wish, and he's simply just looking for a few extra pearls to take along on his trip.

"Yes." Phil nods, folding his gloved hands in front of him onto the counter as he leans forward. "Just a couple, maybe three or so."

"I don't have any," the shopkeeper continues, seeming to think over their words for a moment. "-but I do know who *could* sell them..." The shopkeeper trails off, Phil's face lighting up.

"Great! Could you-"

“You aren’t going to the Ender Dragon, are you?” The shopkeeper asks, their tone tilted in a way that’s almost scolding. Phil opens his mouth to try and maybe give a small white lie, but he’s cut off before a single word can escape his throat. “Don’t you dare lie! I see that bag on your shoulders, you’re preparing for either a very long trip, or for a trip that you might not come back from.”

Phil laughs a little, pushing his hood down to show off his short, blond hair. His ears are a bit reddish from the cold outside, and the small silver earring hanging from his left ear is worn down and old, its shine long lost to time. “No, no...”

“Excuse me!” The shopkeeper huffs, resting their hands on their hips with a deep frown. “Now look at you! You are a young face with a very bright future ahead of you-”

“Mate-” Phil grimaces, getting a pointed finger waved in his direction.

“There are plenty of things you could be doing rather than going out to that stronghold! You could be settling down in a calm town, maybe get a well-paying job, find a warm home. I know I could use another pair of hands around here, say, if you’d like, you could work here!”

“That’s very kind of you to offer, sir.” Phil smiles. “But I’ve come a very long way. I’m not stopping now. Especially when the mountain is so close.”

“Close!” The shopkeeper snorts. “Ha! That mountain is well over a few days from here. You have plenty of time to change your mind.”

“Thank you.” Phil grins, friendly and warm. “But I’d really just like to know where to get those Ender pearls.”

Phil’s leveled with a long stare that makes him consider for a moment if he should just go searching for another town to get a few extra pearls, but the shopkeeper drops their gaze, sighing quietly with a shake of the head. “You’re a naive soul.”

“Maybe.” Phil shrugs with one shoulder, glancing at the other items for sale in the shop he’s in. “I’m determined as well, though.”

“Determined, foolish, call it what you’d like.” The shopkeeper walks off to the side, reaching up to a shelf to grab a small bag of apples. “The last person I saw come through here who said they were going to fight the dragon, they had the same look in your eyes. You all have the same look, you’re all set on finding that *beast* in the End.”

“It’s an incredible creature, though.” Phil points out. “The dragon.”

The shopkeeper sets down the bag of apples on the counter before Phil with a short sigh. “I suppose so. I just know that creature has killed more adventurers than I can count. It’s been a couple months since one of you has passed by, you know? Here I had thought maybe people like you had given up.”

“Nope.” Phil responds, tapping his fingers on the counter. “Afraid not. But don’t worry. I swear I’ll be the last person going through that portal.”

“You know how many times I’ve heard that? Don’t say that to me. I can’t stand it, especially with your bright face. Oh, I wish you luck. Maybe you will be able to kill that dragon. I hope so, for your sake.” They push the bag of apples towards Phil. “Here. Take them along down the street, the building at the corner of the road, with the broken sign? That’s Pete. You take these to him, and tell him I sent you over there. He’ll turn these golden, and he might just have a few ender pearls to spare.”

Phil takes the bag with a nod. “Thank you. I swear I’ll be back.”

“Don’t swear anything. Just stay safe, and think a bit harder about your choice here. Maybe you have come a long way. But I assure you, you’re marching right to your death.”

Phil nods again, a bit more strained this time, and he turns around with a wave goodbye, stepping through the front door of the shop, into the snowy biome outside. A small part of him thinks about the words given to him, yet another warning that sticks to his heart.

The snow is cold against Phil's face, and he sighs out with slight sadness on his shoulders, not quite as heavy as the gear he's dragging along, but still a considerable weight.

How many times now have people told him to turn around? He may have lost count a few towns back. He could've sworn it was around fifty. It may have been more, though. Those warnings were always given in such different wordings.

No one ever returns from the End. Phil knows this as a fact.

He is still absolutely set on getting to that mountain, and getting into that stronghold.

The mountain is a steep, dangerous environment to climb, and for a few moments, Phil thinks that maybe he may die like this. Not from a fight with the dragon, but rather from a misstep that causes him to tumble to his death down below.

His teeth are chattering badly with the cold that rushes through, the freezing wind wrapping up around him and sinking into his very bones. Even with the coat he's wearing, it's not all that good against the cold, and Phil is nowhere near used to this type of weather. From where he came from, it was just grassy green plains, warm sun for as long as the eye could see.

Phil is awfully far from home.

But that's alright. He said goodbye to home a long while ago. He's already turned his back on that, he's willing to give all that over for the chance of a lifetime, a peek into a realm that no one has ever returned from.

Most people would never want to go to such a place. And it makes sense why. The dragon on the other side must be a bloodthirsty, ruthless thing. Who would ever want to go to a land

where there is nothing but void? Nothing there, except a single dragon that wants nothing more than to kill you where you stand.

For most people, that sounds like a nightmare. Trapped in a world where death is practically guaranteed, with the portal not giving any way out. It's a one way trip. A fall into the void, and a fall into the End. Something unknown and terrifying.

Phil thinks it's incredible.

For him, the curiosity eats him up inside, and the thrill of being so near, being so close to see this with his own eyes, it's worth it all. He has nothing back home that could ever compare to the idea of such an adventure, such a high, exciting risk of facing off a *dragon* .

Maybe most people would think of him as insane for jumping headfirst into certain death. But Phil couldn't care less, because he feels like a little kid with how giddy he is, anticipation running through his veins.

He had always loved the stories of the Ender Dragon from when he was little.

Now he can finally see it for himself. (And maybe, if luck is on his side, and the universe is kind, he could become a *story* himself, by killing this very dragon. It's a silly hope, but something in Phil tells him he has a chance. A sliver of a chance, and the idea of that is what makes him keep going.)

The stronghold isn't too hard to find; after all, the entrance to it was found a long time ago. It's a bit blocked off with snow, but Phil's able to dig through it and climb through, and once he's inside, having new shelter from the cold, he pulls back his hood with a long, weary sigh, and collapses against the stone wall.

It's still freezing in here, enough to make Phil shiver, but there's no raging wind, and Phil thinks that's a great improvement from just a few minutes before. His limbs ache from the effort of climbing up the mountain, and he leans back against the cold wall, placing his bag to the side. It's dark inside this place, the torches having long been snuffed out, and the sun from outside is Phil's only source of light.

He has a few torches of his own, though, so he lights those and places them around on the walls, seeing the fire light up the hallways in a warm hue. With the newly added fire, the stone halls of the stronghold almost seem warm, nearly inviting, if you were to ignore the ominous shadows in the corners and the emptiness of the halls.

Phil takes the time to eat lunch as he explores, walking with no real rush, only his curiosity guiding him. He finds broken doors, empty cells, leaking ceilings and cracked walls in need of repair. A dusty, old library sits somewhere down a dim hall, with books that don't hold much other than basic information over the end.

Is this where all the stories have come from? One old library, connected to the very place that leads to the End portal?

Phil is impressed with the way rumors and stories can spread so far.

He moves forward, continuing to search through the stronghold for the real prize of this place. There's a constant echo with his footsteps as he walks, and Phil feels a bit uneasy as he travels through the halls. He's the only person around for miles, no one else is on this mountain. Adventurers come every few months or so, but it seems like Phil is the only visitor for now. He won't lie, it's a bit scary, having to be completely on his own with nothing but his own determination to fuel him, no one to watch his back.

There's a quiet whispering that reaches out from far, far down the hall, and Phil goes still. He holds out a torch and holds his breath, straining his ears to pick out where those voices might be coming from. The whispering picks up again, faint and quiet, and Phil makes his way forward.

He keeps walking towards, hearing those voices get just a bit louder, but not loud enough to make out what they're saying. Although, with the words Phil's hearing, they might not be even speaking a language he knows.

There's a broken doorway with a crumbling ceiling, warm light pouring out into the hallway from it. Phil very nearly sprints his way towards the light, skidding to a stop in front of the

room, and his face breaks out into a wide grin when he comes face to face with the very portal he's been searching for.

The whispering is louder, now, more sharp, and it makes Phil hesitate before he gets closer. The excitement in his chest urges him to go forward, but he has plenty of reason to be wary, so he walks slowly, putting his torch to the side as he observes the old, dusty room around him, with the portal at the center.

Pools of lava sit to the side of the room and just underneath the portal, lighting up the room and giving off enough warmth to make Phil forget for a moment that it was so cold outside. It's warm enough in here for Phil to take off his coat, and he puts aside his bag as well before climbing up the short staircase leading to the portal.

Phil practically kneels down on the cracked stone steps, leaning forward just enough to look down into the lava below, past the gate of the unactivated portal. There's no void, there's no door to another realm, and a slight twinge of disappointment tugs at Phil's heart. His eyes drift towards the frame of the portal, and he stares upon the Eyes of Ender, the very things that are meant to power this thing.

Three of them are cracked.

Phil holds a hand to his chest with a relieved sigh. There's the reason it's not on.

He has six eyes of ender that he brought along, so he's not too worried about the cracked ones. He's glad that there's no need to turn back around on his journey so he can get the proper things needed to turn on the portal. He's come so far, it'd be a pain to have to go back simply because he's unable to turn on the portal.

Going back down the stairs with a small grin, Phil quickly goes to prepare, putting on what little armor he has and taking the supplies he's stocked up with. He has his sword, an axe, a pickaxe. He has food, those golden apples that should help. He has a measly bow slung over his shoulder, with a good pile of arrows at his back.

It's certainly not the best weapons in the world, and Phil certainly isn't the best fighter, but it is the best he can do. And all he can do once he's on the other side is try with everything he's got.

For all he knows, this is going to be a hopeless fight.

It doesn't make it any less exciting for him.

He swaps out the Eyes of Ender in the portal, taking the cracked ones and carefully placing them to the side. Those might be useful, they could be repaired. If- No, when he comes back, he'll want to try and see if he can do anything with them.

Putting in three new eyes, they all slot into place with an echoing ring, and Phil's fingertips feel a bit tingly as he lifts his hand away from each one. Eventually, he's able to put the last eye in, and with a low deep rumble, the portal comes to life.

Phil quickly jumps up the stairs, leaning over and staring right into the void, which stares back with it's quiet, wandering whispers. The lava from before can't be seen, now blocked with an entryway to the End, and Phil can't take his eyes away, married with what looks to be a piece of the night sky, trapped in this little spot.

It nearly seems to be coaxing him to step forward, to fall into that night sky, and Phil takes a small step back, tearing his eyes away to try and double check that he has everything. It's hard to really focus, though, and the portal is right *there* . This is what he's been trying to get to for weeks now, and he can't wait another moment longer.

With that, Phil turns his back to the portal, teetering on the very edge of it with his hands holding on tightly to his bow. Grinning wide, and with nothing else in his way, Phil lets his weight shift, and falls backwards into the void.

Phil lands roughly, to say the least.

He slams into the floor with a groan, his head spinning and his balance thrown off, and for a moment, he just lays there with an ache all over his body. Maybe he should've taken a nap before jumping through to the End. Might've helped just a bit.

There's no way to turn back now, though, and Phil turns his head up towards the sky to check, and he finds only the black sky for as far as he can see. No portal back, no opening out into the overworld.

Just the void, just the End, just him.

A sharp pang of fear hits him, making Phil lean down and press his forehead against the cool obsidian. He breathes in deep, and lets out it slowly, before sitting up and pushing himself onto his feet.

He's on his own, but he expected that. Now, he can finally come do what he was aiming to do the whole time.

Lifting his gaze up ahead, Phil finds a poorly built path leading to the island floating above the void. Dread fills his veins when he realizes all the other adventures before him have died on this island, all because of-

A deep, echoing roar rings out across the End, finding its way into Phil's ears and shaking him to his core. He holds his hands over his ears, crouching down low, and after a moment of hesitation, he's able to force his legs to move. He runs, towards the island with the lightest steps he can manage, trying to stay undetected. How big can this dragon be? If it's as large as the tales say, maybe Phil will be able to slip past its radar and get in close before it can even notice.

Phil's boots crunch against the ground as he runs as fast as he can, making his way over to what he sees first, a giant pillar of obsidian, reaching up into the black sky. He doesn't dare spare a glance to anywhere else, and the moment he's with his back against the wall, tucked away at the base of the pillar, he goes for his bow.

He nocks an arrow, trying to keep his breath steady as he listens in for another roar, another sign that the dragon is nearby, or has noticed him. All he gets is a slight rumble through the ground from underneath his feet, something big moving around.

Carefully inching his way around the pillar, Phil keeps close to the obsidian, pulling back the bowstring and looking past into the center of the island.

He nearly drops his bow, the very air in his lungs coming to a stop.

It's a dragon, alright. With shiny black scales, bright purple spikes along its and sharp claws, it's *huge*, and it's absolutely incredible. Phil is pretty sure he'd be dead within moments if the thing were to ever notice him, its teeth look sharp enough to tear him to shreds, and Phil has no doubts about its fiery breath.

And those wings.

Wings .

Phil might be here to kill the Ender Dragon, but oh, he'd give anything to watch it fly around the sky, just once. He's never seen anything that could ever compare to a *dragon* , and Phil wants nothing more than to watch this incredibly rare creature fly through the air.

This is what he's been chasing after for these weeks, this is what he's heard about ever since he was a kid. *This* is what so many people have been trying to kill, and now Phil is here, ready for his try at taking it down.

It hasn't noticed him yet, and Phil hopes it'll stay like that for just a moment, just long enough so he can take in this whole environment, this whole new world. The dragon stays curled up in the middle of the island, seeming to be covering something from view, and as much as Phil tries to get a peek, he can't see past its wings.

What is it hiding?

Phil continues to try and squint to see what's laying underneath it's giant black wings, and his eye is caught onto a beam of light, some sort of beacon pointed towards the heart of the dragon. He follows the light, all the way up to the very top of one of the towers.

There's two beams of light connected to the dragon, two towers seeming to be the source of it. With Phil not wanting to fight the dragon just yet, he goes towards one of the pillars, careful to not be spotted.

Thankfully, he goes unnoticed, and he stays unnoticed as he slowly climbs his way up the pillar of obsidian, making his way to the top with some slight struggle. He nearly loses his grip at one point, but he stays on, and doesn't fall to his death.

There's some sort of a giant crystal, floating at the center. The beam of light comes from here, and it stays pointed onto the dragon, who is blissfully unaware of Phil about to ruin its whole day.

From here, Phil can see towards the other pillars of obsidian, and he can see the remains of other crystals, having been broken by other adventurers before him. There had to have been a reason they broke these, so Phil decided to follow their example.

Taking a sword in his hand, Phil swings at the crystal, and with a sudden blast, he's thrown backwards with the sound of a furious roar echoing out across the island. Phil nearly falls off the edge, holding on for dear life, his sword falling down onto the ground, away from his reach.

"Shit, shit-!" Phil yells, heart slamming against his ribs with panic as he stays half hanging on, and there's the sound of something moving, a woosh of air flowing past, and Phil looks down past his feet to see the dragon down below. It's not quite flying, not really, but it's moving fast, searching across the land with a growl that reaches up to Phil, traveling through his chest.

Phil's sword hits the ground with a thump, and in a flash, the dragon acts quickly, sending out burning flames towards where the sword landed, and setting the ground on fire. There goes Phil's sword. He's not getting that back.

Pulling himself back up, Phil leans over the edge to watch as the dragon continues to circle around, its wings stretched out, ready to fly.

That crystal had definitely been connected to the dragon in some sort of way. And destroying it had to have given Phil some sort of a advantage.

So with that conclusion, Phil turns his gaze to the pillar beside him, and he looks at the last remaining crystal.

He nocks his bow.

Standing up with an unsteady stance, Phil tries to will his hands to stop shaking, and he aims for the crystal far up ahead. He can make the shot, he knows he can, but there's a little voice in the back of his head wondering if this is really a good idea.

He fires before he thinks too hard about it.

At once, the dragon screeches out, a pained, furious cry as the arrow lands, and the crystal is hit, a large crack rippling through it as it falls onto the ground. Phil falls to the ground, trying to stay low as the sound of flapping wings reaches his ears, and when he looks over the edge, he's staring right into the bright, purple eyes of the dragon.

"Oh *SHIT*- " Phil screams, lunging backwards as a stream of fire shoots out, the burning heat seeming to drag along his skin. He scrambles to get to the other side of the pillar, practically throwing himself off the edge and trying to climb down as fast as he can. Fire continues to shoot out, strangely purple rather than a normal orange-red. Phil doesn't question it, because he's trying to not *die* .

Phil lands onto solid ground with a sigh of relief, but he's not nearly safe yet, because there's another flap of giant wings, and Phil makes his way around the pillar, looking to the center of the island, and finding a very distinct lack of a dragon.

Instead, there's something that looks more like a strange fountain, and before Phil can even entertain the thought of going towards it, a loud, rumbling roar sounds out from over his head.

Looking up into the sky, Phil bursts out laughing in amazement, watching as the dragon flies overhead, circling around, its wings spread out wide as he travels through the air. Then he breaks into a frantic run as the dragon swoops down, a steady stream of fire being thrown in Phil's direction.

Taking another arrow from his collection, Phil pulls it back, and fires, hiding behind an obsidian pillar as more fire comes down.

The fight really starts then, and it becomes a matter of who can outlast who.

Phil runs and hides and slips away at just the last second, always moments away from being burnt to a crisp. He becomes exhausted, then eats his way through a golden apple, and continues to run, firing his shots and having them land. Arrows dig into the dragon's neck, wings, and Phil continues to aim towards its head, hoping to get a good shot.

With each arrow, the dragon cries out and gives a rumbling roar, shaking Phil to his core. With each arrow, Phil's supply of golden apples slowly runs out, along with his collection of arrows behind him.

With each shot, Phil starts to regret it more and more.

He's fighting for his life, he knows that. If he puts down his weapon now, there's no way in hell this dragon is just going to let him walk away. But there's still a certain sense of sadness with having to kill something that he's admired for so long.

Tales of the Ender Dragon have always been known far and wide. Phil's heard it over, heard of the End, heard of the portal, the stronghold, the fight against this beast that no one has ever killed.

Would he be putting this story to an end, if he were to win this fight?

Phil is gaining an edge, he's lasting longer than he thought, and his aim is just as well as he remembers. He ducks behind another obsidian pillar, covers his face as fire flies past, and he bites down on his last apple, the effects chasing away the exhaustion that keeps creeping up into his limbs.

He runs out, watches as the dragon circles around again. Following the dragon with the point of his arrow, Phil keeps his eyes on it, even as it lets out another earth-shattering roar, even as it swoops down, seeming to try and land near the center of the island. Phil fires, and he *regrets* it.

Because it lands right into the dragon's eye.

The creature lets out a pained cry, and Phil's shot it out of the sky, the pain seeming to knock it so off balance that it forgets to flap its wings. It lands to the side, crashing hard into the ground and shaking the island with its impact. Phil drops to the floor, gasping for air as he sees it fall, and he flinches away as another pained screech is thrown out into the void, no one but Phil being able to hear it.

There's only two arrows left in Phil's quiver, and that won't be anything near enough to kill the dragon, so he throws his bow to the side and pulls out his axe instead, getting to his feet. He walks over to the dragon laying on the ground, one step after the other, almost automatic, his mind on autopilot as he reels with the idea of what he's done.

It's one hell of an accomplishment. But somehow, it feels so crushing.

Phil hesitates to get close, but he needs to be near it in order to get a good hit. He has to dig the blade of his axe into the dragon's neck. He knows that would be the fastest way to kill it,

and so he makes his way over to the dragon's head, ignoring the way his hands are trembling as he gets closer.

The dragon is eerily still, breathing out slow with heavy puffs, but not moving, and not struggling. Phil takes the moment to observe it's scales, it's wings, and he finds his arrows scattered across, digging into the dragon's skin.

Taking a few steps closer, Phil leans forward, staring at the dragon's face, and jolting back when it gives out a low growl. Its eye is terribly injured, the arrow sticking out, and Phil stares at it for longer than needed, a sick guilt clinging to his shoulders.

The axe in his hands feels rather heavy, now.

Phil pushes himself forward, trying to move past the fatigue that's quickly spreading across his limbs, and he feels like collapsing next to the dragon he's just brought down and passing out.

Instead, Phil holds tightly onto his axe, stepping close to the dragon, so close that he can reach out and touch its scales, if he wanted to, and he holds up the axe, tries to raise it up-

A quiet whine of despair comes from the dragon, and Phil can't raise the axe any higher.

He steps back.

The dragon before him is littered with arrows stabbed into its scales, and it's terribly hurt from the bad fall from the sky. Phil shot it out of the sky, and by all means, he should finish the job, do what he came here to do.

Instead, he moves his attention away from the dying dragon before him, and he looks towards the center of the island, towards that strange fountain. Phil throws the axe to the side, letting it land onto the ground without a second thought, and he almost stumbles his way over to the center of the End.

The dragon lets out a warning growl, a clear, sharp threat, and Phil doesn't even glance back. He knows the dragon won't be getting up anytime soon.

Upon closer inspection, the fountain really does seem to be a fountain. An empty one, definitely, nothing inside, which is a bit strange. Especially since it's, well, a fountain. In the End.

Phil's eyes wander towards the top of the structure, and he sees that there's something sitting on the top, where water might've come from if this was a normal water fountain. Climbing into the fountain, Phil tries his best to push himself up onto the very top of the ledge, looking at what sits there, at what the dragon might've been hiding this whole time.

Phil sits at the very edge of the top of the fountain, and he goes very still, eyes wide.

And all at once, the crushing feeling of guilt is coming back down.

It's an egg.

It's a *broken* egg.

An old, shattered egg, with a rusty sword beside it, the leftover of some poor soul from long, long ago.

Somehow, everything in Phil's mind shifts a bit, and he holds a hand over his mouth, tearing his eyes away and curling in himself.

Now that he thinks about it, the End doesn't have a way out, does it? There's no way out for any adventurer thus far, and there's no way out for this dragon.

This dragon, who has been living in the only home it knows, with countless people trying to slay it as it tries to protect the remains of what might've once been its egg.

Phil stares off into the distance, his mind working too fast as he tries to think, trying to piece together a way to make this right. For so long, the only goal for coming to the End was to just kill the dragon, conquer the end. That was the only reason why, that was why each and every person went through the portal!

But why would they ever need to kill the dragon when it was just here, past a portal that should be *closed* .

Phil climbs back down to the ground, landing on his feet and quickly making his way towards the dragon. He runs, ignoring the sway in his step, and he stumbles onto the neck of the dragon, leaning against it for balance. It's still breathing, still alive, but for how much longer?

How can Phil even heal this?

Phil drags himself up towards the dragon's face, his hands resting lightly around its injured eye, and Phil's hand hovers over the arrow for a moment, before pulling away.

The dragon stays silent.

Phil turns to the pillars around him, the rest of the island. Those crystals had to be for something, surely, so maybe if Phil *fixes* one-

He goes to the nearest pillar, and begins to climb. It's much slower this time around, with the lack of adrenaline, and the lack of golden apples to help him along. He has basic food, some water that could help, but Phil doesn't want to sit down and eat dinner, he needs to make this right.

So he pulls himself up to the very top of the tower, his hands slipping at times, and his feet not quite staying steady at certain moments. Phil is able to drag himself up to the top, and to his luck, this is the one he had shot down.

The arrow is still lodged in it, and it's cracked terribly, but there's a faint glow still. Phil grabs at the crystal without any regard for his own safety, and he tries to yank the arrow out. He can't pull it out without damaging it any more, so he gives up on that, and instead tries to put it back to where it was before, floating on its little spot at the center of the pillar.

He holds it out, tries to adjust it accordingly, and he almost wants to cry out of pure relief when the glowing picks up, and there's a slight pull to the crystal.

It's not floating, not as much as before, but it's just barely hovering above its platform, and Phil thinks that might just be enough, because a small beam of light comes from the crystal, pointed right towards the dragon that's laid out across the ground.

Phil watches the beam for a moment, hands still outstretched beside the crystal in case it falls, and he eventually scoots back, pushing himself to get down as fast as he can.

He lands onto the ground a bit harshly, but it's nothing against the frantic hope growing in Phil's chest, and he limps his way over to the dragon, trying to check on its eye once again.

The arrow from before is now on the ground, and Phil watches up close as the dragon's wounds start to fade away, its skin mending back together without a single scratch.

"You're alright." Phil breathes out, resting his weight against the dragon's head, sighing a bit in exhaustion. "You're going to be just fine." He reassures again, trying to not think too hard about the fact he's reassuring a literal dragon. He's *healing* a dragon.

A dragon that will be furious with him when it's back to full health.

Phil can't find it in himself to care, because he's absolutely exhausted, and curling up beside the sleeping dragon and taking a nap sounds really good right about now. It also sounds stupid, but it's all Phil is really capable of right now, anyway.

Slowly sitting down onto the ground, Phil lays down on his back with a groan, the relief seeming to sap away the last of his energy. He's been running around and firing arrows for what feels like hours, he's been running on adrenaline for a while, and now that it's gone, the fight over, Phil's tired.

A rumble travels through the ground as Phil tries to crack his eyes open, and he turns his head to find the dragon staring right back at him, seeming to be taking him in. Phil's not one to give up easily, but he's tired as fuck, and it's not like he has a way out from the End, so he rolls over, accepts the fact he's probably about to die, and just tries to take a nap.

The dragon beside him doesn't light him on fire, and a half-healed wing is placed over Phil's body, shielding him away from view. Phil hears and feels another rumble from the dragon beside him, and he closes his eyes, passing out with the newly-gained respect and protection of a tired dragon.

Chapter End Notes

Pls do disregard any typos, I am sleepy rn and I'm not gonna bother to give a second glance till tomorrow after school, haha

Hope you enjoyed! thank u for reading

The ender dragon is a menace

“-Tommy?” Phil’s voice echoes in and out, and Tommy tries to grab onto it, if only to pull himself out of the horrid nap he’s currently taking. “Tommy, hey. Come on, mate.”

There’s a hand holding onto his, and Tommy squeezes, getting a squeeze in return as Phil speaks again, words floating over Tommy’s head. He’s laying down with his back against the ground, head spinning a bit. He can’t tell if it’s just because he’s dizzy or if he’s actually feeling ground rumbling underneath him, a strange sound reaching his ears.

“Shhh, you.” Phil says, and his voice isn’t turned towards Tommy, but rather someone else. “Yes- Yes, I missed you too, but some space. *Space* . Get back, you little-”

The ground rumbles again, and it processes finally that Tommy is hearing a *growl* .

“Hey!” Phil snaps, and the rumbling simmers down, but not enough to where Tommy can’t feel it in the ground anymore. Tommy pries his eyes open with a quiet groan, listening to Phil continuing to speak. “Don’t act like that. I really do have to start visiting you more often, I know, I *know*- ”

He blinks up at the sight of the pitch black void, and for a moment, all he can think is where have all the stars gone? There’s always plenty of stars in the sky at night, he and Tubbo often made a game out of it when they got really bored, counting the pinpricks of light out above their town...

A huff of hot air is blown towards both Tommy and Phil, and Tommy raises his head with surprise, Phil only laughing.

“You always get so cranky when I don’t come for a while.” Phil says, and his gaze is focused on the head of an actual *dragon* staring them both down. Phil doesn’t seem perturbed by the fact that the dragon is large enough to bite his head off without even trying, and instead he just holds his hands out towards its snout, snickering as the dragon gives another huff of hot air, Phil’s hair flying back.

“Hello, hello.” Phil grins, and Tommy watches as the dragon turns its head, pushing against Phil, and then focusing its eye right onto Tommy.

Tommy squeaks, (not in fear, no, no, obviously not, Tommy is never scared of anything), immediately catching Phil’s attention.

“Tommy!” Phil moves his hands away from the *dragon* , (big, scary dragon, are it’s eyes *glowing*- ?) going towards Tommy instead to help him sit up a bit. “Are you alright? Do you feel okay?”

“Uh-” Tommy opens his mouth, but nothing comes out, and he can’t tear his eyes away from the giant creature that keeps *staring* at them. He thinks it might be angry. No, it’s totally angry. He is going to die here. “What the fuck.” He chokes out, eyes wide.

Phil lets Tommy lean against him as he sits up, and Tommy is glad for the offer, because he needs something to cling to with the fear and shock that’s currently thrumming through his veins. His heartbeat rings in his ears and he feels a lump in his throat and that is the beast of the End, looking right at him, and it’s supposed to be *dead* .

That is all that Tommy has heard from when he was young, hell, that is how the entire empire was *born* . Off the death of a dragon and the victory of the man sitting beside him.

Seems like the stories had been a bit off, though.

“She’s friendly.” Phil reassures, noting how Tommy can’t seem to look away. “You passed out for a bit, I think everything from today caught up to you...”

“That-” Tommy swallows. “That makes sense, yeah.” If there’s anything that can make him go unconscious from sheer surprise, it’s the sight of the Ender Dragon screeching out through the void. Tommy can practically hear its roar again, echoing in his ears, and he makes the tiniest move towards Phil, nearly trying to use him as a shield. He hopes the dragon isn’t going to take that as a sign of weakness or something, and decide to have him as a snack.

“Are you feeling alright?” Phil asks, and he rests an arm over Tommy’s shoulders, keeping him steady. “You can lay back down if you want.”

“Oh, no, I-” Tommy gives a burst of nervous laughter, and there's another rumble sent through the ground, the dragon leaning back and away from them both.

It hovers at a distance, opening its mouth the slightest bit, as if it’s baring its teeth towards Tommy just to freak him out. That’s too many teeth, far too many sharp teeth, and Tommy just knows he's absolutely going to die, and then Tubbo is going to kill him, for being eaten by a dragon. He’s going to die twice, and at this point, he’s hardly surprised.

Without a single warning, the dragon suddenly leans closer, and a burst of bright purple sparks is sent towards them, flying through the air and onto both Phil and Tommy.

Tommy screams, because of course he will, the dragon is shooting fire at them, and Phil frantically tries to hold onto him as the teen kicks and tries to scoot away. It’s not burning, if anything, Tommy just feels too warm, but that doesn’t hold off the panic of seeing something similar of purple flames come his way after seeing those same flames shoot out just moments prior.

“We gotta go, we gotta fucking go-!” Tommy yells, turning his head towards where his kidnappers had been before. There’s nothing there except for a black scorch mark on the ground, and oh boy, isn’t that comforting? He doesn’t remember the dragon specifically burning them up, he knows Phil had pressed his head into his shoulder, not letting him look, but Tommy is still very aware of what exactly *happened* to those people.

“No no no, it’s fine- it’s okay-” Phil reassures, wrapping a wing around Tommy and trying to keep him close so he won’t go running off to nowhere. There aren’t many places to run to on a single island out in the End, Phil would know. “She’s just messing with you, that’s just a thing she does-”

“It’s going to fucking *burn* us-!”

“Nooo, we’re fine, mate-” Phil laughs, and Tommy shakes his head, eyes wide, the dragon leaning close again as Tommy screams once more. “Oh, you- *Space* . I’m sorry, yes, I *know*-” Phil holds a hand out towards the dragon, practically shooing it off, and said dragon makes a sad noise that almost reminds Tommy of a cat.

Except cats are cute. This is a giant deadly Ender Dragon. Big difference, there.

“Go over there. Over *there* . You’re freaking him out, go. Go.” Phil scolds, and the dragon does move away, but not without being a bit upset, tail whacking against the ground with a huff of smoke. “Just give me a moment, Kaida.”

There’s a sharp growl that makes Tommy shrink away towards Phil, but the dragon does turn away, folding out its wings and stretching them high before settling them back onto its scales, and curling up on the ground a good distance away.

“Gods, she gets so upset when I don’t visit often.” Phil sighs, shaking his head a bit. “That’s on me, though, I should be putting time aside...”

“Visit.” Tommy repeats, huddling closer towards Phil, eyes wide as he tries to calm the racing heartbeat slamming against his ribs. “You- You visit the dragon?”

“I’m supposed to.” Phil shrugs, and Tommy finally looks up towards him, finding a familiar smile pointed towards him. Even with the impossible situation they've been thrown into, Phil looks so carefully calm, and it helps, somehow. Tommy wonders offhandedly if with all the years of being an emperor, Phil’s mastered being able to present himself however he likes. “She gets lonely without me.”

“Its-” Tommy spares a careful glance towards the dragon, watching it shift from where it's resting. “Isn’t the dragon supposed to be dead?” Tommy whispers, as if he’s trying to not let the creature hear him.

Phil snorts, leaning in and whispering back. “That’s what everyone seems to think.”

“That’s what I was told! Fuck, Phil- that’s what everyone was told!” Tommy shakes his head. “Even from when we were kids, and the caretakers would just tell us stories, or from the books in the library- Wilbur and Techno even told me you killed the dragon! They had the whole story, they- Did- Do they not know?!”

“They know.” Phil responds, short and simple. “I told them when they were younger, but they swore never to tell.”

“So you’ve just lied to everyone else?” Tommy asks, leaning back with a frown. “Why would you lie about-”

There’s a deep, loud rumble that cuts Tommy off, and both him and Phil turn to the dragon that’s gone to turn over onto its side, wings stretched out across the ground. It gives a huff, and rests once again.

“You can be a bit angry if you want.” Phil says slowly, pulling away his gaze from the dragon to look back at Tommy, who stays looking at the creature. “But I have a good reason for this, if you want to hear me out.”

“I’m not angry.” Tommy mutters, and Phil raises his eyebrows. “I’m not! I’m- surprised. I’m in shock. It’s not-” He huffs. “It’s not every day you find out your dad is hiding the Ender Dragon.”

Phil blinks.

“Or- I mean- shit-” Tommy sputters, face red as he pulls away from Phil to scoot back. “Fuck, I meant- Tubbo said-”

“No, its-” Phil holds his hands out towards Tommy, face breaking out into a grin. “It’s fine, it’s fine.”

“I didn’t mean to say that-” Tommy blurts out, desperately trying to smooth over his mistake. It’s not his fault, okay, after the frankly stressful situation and the time at the palace, Tommy’s head must’ve just stopped working for a moment. For just a few seconds, Tommy really did think that Phil was his dad, and he should’ve fucking known about the Ender Dragon. “You’re not- I’m not your kid, yet- I mean- *shit*- ”

“One thing at a time.” Phil reaches forward, grabbing Tommy by the hand and squeezing. He looks impossibly happy, and his grip around Tommy’s palm feels grounding against the slight panic that’s at the back of Tommy’s mind.

“I know about the adoption.” Tommy says without thinking, because, yeah, this is a perfect time to say that. “Tubbo says you’re obvious.” He adds on, and Phil jerks back a bit, seeming a bit sheepish.

“We can-” Phil’s voice wavering for a moment, and he clears his throat. “We can get back to that later.” He suggests, a little desperately, and Tommy snorts. “You’ve already been overwhelmed once, let’s just take one thing at a time, yeah? We’ll talk about it at home.”

Tommy hesitates for a moment, considering for just a second on pushing it and maybe talking about it now, but the dragon has started to take his attention, and the overwhelming curiosity is flowing back in waves, now that a lot of the fear has mostly faded.

“Okay.” He nods, Phil smiling. “Tell me about the dragon, instead, then.”

“What do you want to know?” Phil raises an eyebrow, letting go of Tommy’s hand, and they both look towards the resting beast who keeps its back turned towards them.

Tommy thinks for a moment, hearing the dragon huff. “Why did you lie to the entire kingdom about it? Everyone, and I mean everyone thinks you killed it. That’s how the empire started. And you- you lied.”

“Not exactly.” Phil shrugs. “It was more of the general assumption. I never said outright I killed it, but everyone seemed to assume I did. I figured letting them think that was more beneficial than letting anyone know what really happened.”

“Because then they'd be pissed off?” Tommy asks. “If you told them you didn't actually kill it.”

“I never cared much about the backlash, mate. It was more about what would come next.” Phil pauses, tilting his head to the side in thought. “Before the empire, before all of this, did you know how many travelers came here? Hundreds of people like me went through the portal before.”

Tommy has heard of that much, at least. He knows of why Phil killing the dragon was such a big deal, it was because no one ever returns from the End. No one ever comes back, after facing off the dragon. Phil was the first.

“It's- The thing is, with the dragon, it hardly affects us at all from here. I mean, without the portal and the stronghold, we wouldn't even know it existed. Everyone thinks it's dead, and even though it's very much not, the dragon being alive doesn't affect anyone back home. It's only just living here.” Phil says, and Tommy's face scrunches up a bit in confusion. “Think of it like this. How would you feel, if people came into your home, every single day, for *years* , trying to kill you?”

Tommy feels like he would be very ticked off by that. But also, he reckons a dragon would feel the same. Pissed off and annoyed for intruders coming so often, when it's never even left the end at all.

But with the dragon being ‘dead’, there's no more hunters coming along.

“You were protecting it.” Tommy says aloud, and he stares down at his hands with a frown. “You weren't- the protections around the portal, the door, it was to keep people from coming after it again.”

Phil hums. “It didn't deserve to be killed. And I don't blame it for being so vicious with all the other hunters before me. They took something from it.” Tommy raises his head towards Phil as he holds a hand out. “Can you walk?”

Tommy nods, grabbing Phil's hand and letting him pull him to his feet. Phil leads Tommy right towards the center of the island, not sparing a glance towards the dragon that's raised its head in curiosity, following them both with bright eyes. Tommy stares back, and he wonders what it must be thinking.

"Here." Phil says, as they reach towards the fountain in the middle. It's empty, nothing inside, and Phil helps Tommy climb in it, then points to the top of it, where something is sitting on the ledge, just out of Tommy's reach. "I'll help you up. Careful."

Phil lets Tommy step onto his palm and lifts him high enough so Tommy can grab onto the ledge, pulling himself up and kneeling at the very edge of it, teetering and trying to not fall. Holding a hand out, Tommy looks in front of him, and blinks.

He doesn't really know what he's looking at, at first, but then he notices the familiar round shape of a shell, broken and old, remains of...

"This is an egg." Tommy says, eyebrows furrowing in confusion.

"Was an egg." Phil responds, and a wave of dread hits Tommy. "I found it like that when I first came here. A hunter probably got to it. There had been an old sword beside it when I first saw it."

Tommy stares, the information sinking in as the slow realization forms inside his head, and there's a quiet *rage* that grows in his chest. He bites the inside of his mouth with a shake of his head, and looks back towards Phil with wide eyes. "No."

"I know, Tommy."

"No, that's-" Tommy shakes his head. "It had an egg? It-? Why would-?!"

"Mate, people had been trying to kill the dragon for *years*. Destroying its egg would be part of it."

“But that was an egg!” Tommy yells. “That was *her* egg, it wasn’t-”

A gust of hot air blows against Tommy, his hair being pushed back, and he looks up from Phil to find the dragon staring at him again. It keeps a watchful gaze with Tommy’s hands being so close to the egg shards.

Tommy feels a sudden sense of pity for the creature before him. He knows that the dragon is capable of burning him to a crisp, and it hardly has any use for his sympathy, but still, Tommy can’t help but feel so outraged and upset at the fact that so many people came into this dragon’s home with nothing but the intent to slay it.

Phil had come here to slay it.

He turns around towards Phil again, eyes burning. “Why didn’t you kill the dragon?” He demands, maybe a bit more sharp than needed. “You said you came here for that, but you didn’t kill her. Why?”

“She’s my friend.” Phil smiles, holding up a hand to help Tommy down. “And I’m a weak-hearted person.”

Tommy doesn’t take Phil’s hand at first, but he does come down one way or another, because then purple sparks are flying out behind him, courtesy of the dragon, and he’s falling right off towards the ground. Phil scrambles to catch him in time, Tommy screaming.

“Kaida!” Phil yells, the dragon turning and walking away. “Hey! Get back here, you little shit!”

“I don’t think she likes me.” Tommy mutters, standing on his feet with a relieved sigh.

“No, she just doesn’t get new people here often.” Phil responds, huffing with a bit of frustration. “I’m sure she likes you.”

“Agree to disagree, Phil.” Tommy deadpans. He sighs. “It’s fine. I’m sure she will realize my charming looks and wonderful personality the second time I come visit.” Because he is definitely coming back, with or without Phil’s permission. It’s a fucking dragon, there’s no way Tommy can’t come back to see it again.

“Of course.” Phil smiles. “Although, the way back is...a bit blocked.”

Tommy blinks. “Wasn’t there a portal home?” Tommy asks, raising an eyebrow.

“We’re standing in it, mate.” Phil answers, gesturing to the empty fountain they’re currently standing in.

Tommy looks down at his feet, looking around for anything significant. He gives a glance towards the egg, then frowns. “It’s not doing anything.”

“It’s not activated. The portal back home is only controlled by one certain being...” Phil trails off, and he turns his head towards the dragon. It looks back towards Tommy and Phil, then turns its head away with a huff, standing up to walk somewhere else.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake.” Tommy groans, burying his face into his hands. “We’re getting held hostage by a dragon.”

“I knew I should’ve been visiting her more often.” Phil says, and Tommy gives a pained noise.

Repair, rest, and rumors

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“You all should probably head home for the night.” Puffy says, after the situation has simmered down and the night has fallen into a calm silence.

The repairs are already being made in the hallways, and while the security had been shaky for the first hour or two since the emperor left, it’s stabilized by now, and a good crowd of traitors sit in cells, waiting for punishment. Any other plans going against the crown were snuffed out quickly, with the doors being locked shut and the castle on lockdown, it wasn’t hard to corner those who were left.

Technically, the castle is still in lockdown, and it will stay as such until the emperor returns. But really, it’s become calm and safe again, and everyone involved simply are recovering from the aftermath.

Puffy paces in her office, fixing up bottles that have been left everywhere, a mess of spills and half-made potions on her brewery stand. Those people had gotten their dirty hands all over her things, and it’s clear they did not know what they were doing. Puffy isn’t surprised it took so little time for their grand plan to crumble up and burn. By now, the remains of their attempt on the portal is being swept and cleaned away, and by next week, this is just going to be another event on the calendar for her to laugh about.

Oh, the occasional treason and evil plots festering underneath the castle floors. She thinks the experience just comes with being the royal nurse.

Dream and Foolish stay close, and they sit at her desk, Foolish sitting in what is usually her chair, and Dream leaning onto his shoulders from behind. Their heads turn with each movement Puffy makes, and it’s a little endearing, on how laser focused they are on what she’s doing, where she walks. It’s also a little concerning, but she understands the reason why. She lets them linger, rather than force them to go rest early for the night.

“Are you sure we should go?” Niki asks, standing in the middle of the room with a conflicted face. “I mean, it’s only been a few hours since Tommy and Phil disappeared...”

“The castle is safe enough for now, and those two will make their way back eventually.” Puffy shrugs, leaning her weight against the desk as she turns her attention to Niki. “It’s just a matter of waiting for now, and they could be a while. It’s best if you all go back to town, have a quiet night and rest while we clean up here at the castle.”

Niki nods slowly, holding a hand to her chin, and she turns around to see what Tubbo and Ranboo think.

“I am not going.” Tubbo grits out, arms crossed over his chest with a nasty scowl. He’s a furious ball of anger, but Puffy knows the traits of a tired kid, even through the grumpiness. She knows Tubbo is just barely holding back a yawn behind all that stubbornness. “I just got Tommy back, and now he’s gone again. When I get him back, I’m killing him.”

“That’s not ideal. And didn’t you already kill him?” Ranboo mutters out from where he’s laying down on one of the beds pushed against the wall. “And how is it his fault for getting kidnapped-?”

“Go to bed.”

“Oh, that sounds like such a good idea.” Ranboo faceplants into his pillow. “But my head hurts.”

“Give me a second...” Puffy trails off, huffing as she finds another bottle left open, half empty. It gets added to the throw-away pile, and Foolish stares at the bottles as she puts it there. “I probably have at least *one* good potion around here somewhere.”

“That would help.” Niki smiles gratefully, eyes focused towards Ranboo curled up on the bed, seeming to still be recovering from his teleportation from earlier. Today was further than he’s ever pushed it, she wouldn’t be surprised if he ends up being sick later on from the overexertion. She sighs. “We do need to go home, though, Tubbo.”

“No.” Tubbo refuses nearly instantly.

“Puffy just said, it might be a while until Tommy and Phil get back-”

“Nope.”

“And everything’s calmed down-”

“I refuse.”

“Ranboo needs rest, look at him.” Niki waves a hand towards the teen, and Ranboo gives an appropriate noise of suffering.

“Why can’t we just spend the night here?” Tubbo bargains. “They’ve got space.”

“Go home.” Puffy cuts in. “If Phil was here, he’d probably offer you a room, but he’s not, and I’ll speak in his place, and send you home. It’s been a crazy day, and what we all need is a small sense of normality, at *home* .” She walks towards Ranboo and holds out a bottle. “Here, drink that.”

“Thaaanks.” Ranboo takes it with a grateful smile.

Tubbo still doesn’t budge, walking over to Ranboo’s bedside and giving himself a seat beside Ranboo. Ranboo just scoots while also carefully sipping at the potion he’s been given. “Home isn’t normal without Tommy. I’ll stay here, and I’ll just wait till they get back.”

“You’re going to wait all night?” Puffy asks dryly, raising her eyebrows.

“They could be back before sunrise. We don’t know. You don’t know! I’m waiting.”

“Tubbo.” Niki says gently.

“I’m going to wait.” Tubbo insists, pulling his feet up onto the bed, sitting with his legs crossed. He stares down at his clasped hands with a huff. “I can wait.” He says quietly, and there’s a slight waver in his voice. Ranboo raises his head with a concerned warble.

Puffy pauses in where she’s reaching for another bottle, and she steps back, giving Niki a knowing look.

“Well, I’m going to go search for the princes. Maybe I can get them to sleep early for tonight.” Puffy says, excusing herself and walking out of the room, leaving Niki, Ranboo, and Tubbo behind with some privacy. Both Dream and Foolish follow right after her, like little ducklings. She doesn’t seem surprised by it at all.

Niki watches her go with a hum, then turns her gaze to Tubbo, walking up to the bed as Ranboo pulls himself up to sit and lean lightly against Tubbo’s shoulder. She sits down in front of them both.

“Tubbo.”

“I know.” Tubbo sighs, grimacing a bit. “I just don’t see why we can’t stay here until Tommy’s back.”

“It could be a while. From what I’ve gathered, they both probably went through the portal after Phil went after him.” The moment those portal doors shut, it was just silence, not a sound getting through the reinforced walls. It’s unknown what they’re really doing, past that door, but it’s simple to assume. All that they can do is wait, Tubbo is right on that part.

But Niki doesn’t want him to worry.

“Then can’t we just wait till morning?” Tubbo asks, eyes brimming with tears.

“Hey, hey.” Niki holds her hands out, resting them onto his arms. She holds on tight, leaning down so that she can look right at Tubbo. “You know they’ll be back. He’ll be back, he’ll be alright. And yes, we can wait till morning. But Ranboo should rest at home, and I feel safer back at the house, rather than here. Especially since an entire insurrection just happened while we were here.”

“Yeah.” Tubbo scoffs, sniffing a bit. “You’d think the security here would be better.”

Niki chuckles along. “It’s been a long day.”

“We can still stay the night here, though, can’t we?” Ranboo asks, fiddling with the bottle in his hands. “I mean, surely it wouldn’t inconvenience anyone-”

“No, you’re going home to rest.” Tubbo cuts him off, narrowing his eyes at him.

“You are *not* staying here alone.” Ranboo throws right back, voice sharp.

“Fine. Then we can go back to town.” Tubbo lifts his head up with a huff, seeming to decide right at the moment. He pauses. “But we’re coming back the second I hear Tommy is back. The second.”

“I’ll agree with that.” Niki leans back. “Will you be alright?”

“Staying here won’t make him get back faster.” Tubbo rubs at his eyes, Ranboo sipping out of his potion bottle. “And I want Ranboo to go to sleep in his own bed. The castle is nice...but I’d like to see the plaza again.”

“You sure?” Niki presses, searching for any more hints of Tubbo being upset.

“I’m sure.” Tubbo nods. “I just- I think I just want to go home, for now. I’ll be okay.”

Niki smiles, pulling Tubbo in for a hug, grabbing Ranboo and roping him in as well. She squeezes them both as tight as she can in her arms, ignoring their growing complaints. They both hug back just as tightly.

Meanwhile, Puffy walks through the hallways with a certain pair of twins in her mind. She’s sure they’re somewhere safe, but that’s not the big concern here. The concern is if they’re alright.

“Ma, could we head back home already?” Dream asks, adjusting his mask on his face as he quickly rubs at his eyes underneath it. “Everything’s settled down again. You were in a *cell* earlier today.”

“Yeah, we could go rest at home. I could make hot chocolate?” Foolish asks, voice hopeful.

Puffy stops in her walking and looks behind her to the two of them with a fond smile. “That does sound nice.” They both nod in agreement. “But I just want to talk to the princes real quick before we go.” They both deflate in disappointment.

“You’re *our* mom, though.” Foolish mutters under his breath, Puffy shaking her head with amusement.

“And their dad is currently in the End. They need some comfort. It’ll be only a few minutes, I promise.” Puffy swears. “Then we’ll go.”

Dream shrugs. “Okay. Then where are they?”

“That’s the only problem.” Puffy turns the corner with a thoughtful look, trying to imagine where the princes might’ve gone. “They were around during the start of repairs, but then they ran off while things were getting back on track, and-”

“If you went into the End, and I was worried about you, I would go into your room.” Foolish says, completely honest and blunt. “Dream would too. We do already when you’re gone, because we miss you-”

Dream whacks Foolish in the arm. “Nono, don’t- Shuddup.”

“Ow!”

Puffy grins. “I miss you both too when I am at work. But you’ve got a good point there, Foolish. Come on.”

Wilbur and Technoblade barge into Phil’s room once again, but this time it’s not for a gift to give to Tommy, it’s just to rest in his empty bed for the night.

It’s like an unspoken agreement between the both of them, words exchanged without either of them opening their mouths. When they went to sleep for the night, they both walked right up to Phil’s door, and Wilbur didn’t say a thing when he followed Technoblade inside.

He just rummaged through Phil’s pillows, kicked off his shoes and cape, and took a spot on the bed for himself.

They’ve done this before, he remembers. Times when Phil’s off on a work trip, or off visiting the End, it can take a night, or several. Sometimes, there’s no need to miss him, and the twins will sleep fine in their bed, not having a single worry.

And then, other nights, they'll have this. An impromptu sleepover, almost similar to the ones they used to have when they were smaller, crawling into Phil's bed after a bad nightmare. On rare occasions, they'll still do that even now, when Techno's head gets too loud, or when Wilbur can't fall asleep.

It's a small tradition of a sort. A little habit that they'll never shake off. Wilbur doesn't ever want to be rid of it, because at times like these, when the room is dark and the castle settles down into silence, there's a soft fondness that curls up in his heart.

"I can't sleep if you keep doing that." Wilbur calls out, turning over on his side to look towards where Technoblade is poking through Phil's things, candlelight coming from the closet.

"I *know* that the candlelight isn't nearly bright enough to keep you from sleeping, Wilbur." Technoblade scoffs, and he steps out of the closet to look towards the bed. "You've slept in weird places."

"You really should try taking a nap on the floor one of these days. It's relaxing."

"Pass." Techno hums, going back into the closet, silence dragging on once more.

"What are you even doing?"

"Looking for something."

"We already got a gift for Tommy."

"Not that."

“Then what are you *doing* ?” Wilbur insists, and when he gets no answer, he gives a tired sigh, dragging himself onto his feet. “Techno.”

“Give me a second.” Technoblade says, and Wilbur walks up towards the closet, peeking in to find a mess of clothes on the ground, capes, cloaks, shirts. “Wait, I think I found it.”

Technoblade pulls out a light blue cape, something faded and old, but still good. He searches through it, as if something might be hidden in the fabric, and Wilbur stares at him with a slow blink, waiting for something grand to happen.

A soft smile spreads across Technoblade’s expression, and it rubs on Wilbur, curiosity digging into him. “What is it?” Wilbur asks, taking a single step forward, and then Technoblade lifts it up.

A single black feather. Phil’s feather.

Wilbur holds his hands out, walking over the mess of fabrics on the ground and making his way to Techno, who places it in Wilbur’s hand, before putting the cape to the side, trying to somewhat fold it neatly.

“How did you know this was there?” Wilbur asks, turning the feather over carefully in his hands, a slow grin growing onto his face.

“You know how sometimes Phil’s feathers get stuck on his clothes if he doesn’t preen?” Techno shrugs. “I thought he probably had at least one stuck on one of his capes. I just- I wanted something of his for the night. While he’s in the End.”

Wilbur smiles, looking up at Technoblade with a fond look. “You could’ve just taken one of his capes.”

“Eh.”

Wil rolls his eyes, closing his hand gently around the feather. “Okay. Come on, I’m tired. I just want to sleep.”

“I don’t know, I could still stay up...” Technoblade jokes, and then yawns right after, Wilbur scoffing. “Hardly even exhausted.” He finishes, sighing.

They both go to bed, Wilbur letting the single feather sit on the mattress between them, a poor substitution for Phil as they sleep. It’s not much, but it’s enough for now, and Wilbur knows Phil will be back soon enough. He doesn’t ever take long when traveling to the End. That dragon could never keep him there, it adores Phil too much to see him sad.

When Puffy finally does get to Phil’s room, her knock goes unanswered, and the twins stay asleep. She opens the door, just enough to peek inside, and gets a glance of the two of them sleeping quietly beside each other, resting for the night.

She lets them sleep, and takes her own sons home.

“Tubbo?”

Tubbo opens his eyes with a groan, face half buried into Ranboo’s shoulder. “Huh?”

“The carriage stopped. We’re here.” Niki says again, gently shaking him awake. “Ranboo, you too. Come on, we’re right outside the bakery.”

“Let me sleep...” Ranboo mutters, curling up more into his seat. “We can sleep here.”

Niki yawns, laughing a little. "I'm pretty sure the person who took us here needs to get back to the castle."

"That's true." Tubbo says quietly, blinking his eyes open with a bleary gaze. "Are we here?"

"Yes, I said so already." Niki responds. "Come on. Get up. I'll open the door."

Tubbo groans and buries his face back into Ranboo's arm with a sigh. He feels heavy with sleep, but Niki is right. They should go inside. A bed might be even more comfortable than this spot right here.

The door opens with a small gush of cold air, and a chill travels right up Tubbo's spine, making him shiver and try to use Ranboo as a shield from the cold. Of course, he almost forgot while being half asleep. It's night and they're in the Antarctic Empire. It's always freezing by now, but Tubbo isn't used to that because he's usually asleep by this time.

He cracks his eyes open with a frown, seeing the dim lights of the plaza from here, Niki poking her head out with a surprised look. Tubbo hears voices, sees people gathered around, and- is that a crowd?

"Are we home?" Ranboo asks, finally stirring from his rest, and he squints at Niki with a yawn. "What's going on?"

"Uh." Niki falters. "Nothing. Maybe we *should* go back to the castle."

"What?" Tubbo lifts his head. "Wait, why?" He wakes up a bit more with the curiosity of what's going on, and suddenly it seems like the voices outside are so much easier to hear, and he can pick out the words being said towards them.

"Is that really-?"

“He has to know something about it-”

“Do you think he knew the whole time? Well, I’ve always seen those two running around-”

Niki leans back into the carriage with a conflicted look. “Okay. There’s a lot of people in front of the bakery, and I don’t think they’re here for a cupcake.”

Tubbo frowns, and he pulls away from Ranboo’s side to lean out the door, ignoring Niki’s warning. He looks out towards the people crowded around, face scrunched up in confusion.

“What’s going on?” Tubbo asks aloud. “What do you want?”

“You’re coming back from the castle, aren’t you? So you must know-” Someone says, and they cut off with another overlapping voice.

“Tommy and you can always come back around for a job, if you’d like! I won’t mind at all, you both have always been good workers-”

“Say, how is the emperor? He must be doing well, if he’s told the kingdom-”

“What?” Tubbo asks, taking a step out of the carriage, Ranboo peeking over his shoulder with a curious, sleepy look. He retreats at the sight of all the people. “Why are you talking about Tommy? What are you talking about?”

“Oh, the announcement has been spreading around like wildfire!” Someone finally says, answering him directly. “That kid, your friend, Tommy, was it? He must be with his family now. We’re so glad the emperor has found his long lost son!”

Tubbo blinks.

“ *What .* ”

Chapter End Notes

(Small bit of context that I'll be elaborating on the next chapter- One of the traitors was able to leak the emperor's "Secret" to the public. the one in which they think Tommy is his secret son. The public is having a grand time with this info)

Hello, hello! Hope you liked the chapter, sorry it's short, with school and all that jazz, writing sure does get hard to do, haha.

Still got a good amount of chapters to go. I wanna go through an arc of Tommy settling into the family, and then some royal shenanigans, and those wings, ah, so much so write. Can't wait!

Thank you for reading <3

(Also, this chapter is dedicated to Misty, from twitter. Better get to doodlin, Misty. Shouldn't have made a bet lolz)

Made of stars

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Wilbur wakes up to Techno's hair in his face and the sound of the door slamming open, Tubbo walking in as if he has no regard for the literal princes sleeping inside. (Of which he does not.)

Royalty or not, Tubbo would like some favors. Personally, he thinks he deserves it, for all the stress his idiot has put him through. Tommy's technically the prince by now, yeah? Then Tubbo, by default, now has the royal family owing him.

Because that's exactly how it works, definitely, he made sure Tommy didn't die for all his life, and now he's going to get paid for his hard work. Hopefully with money in the future. Hopefully with a *favor*, now.

"Wake up, your highnesses!" Tubbo yells, ignoring the way Techno jerks awake and nearly falls off the bed, Wilbur giving him a withering glare as he sits up from the pillows. "Rise and fucking shine, the sun is up and half the kingdom thinks Tommy is the emperor's son, you have been *missing* some events-"

"What?" Wilbur asks, still half-asleep and not quite believing he's hearing that correctly. He doesn't think he's hearing anything correctly. He feels as if someone's dragged him out of the comforting, quiet void to face a loud screaming child. Maybe because that is what happened. "What are you- Why are you in here?!"

"Where are the guards?" Technoblade groans, and maybe he doesn't really mean that, maybe he does. All he wants is to go back to sleep. The sight of a familiar black feather sitting just beside him on the mattress sends a quiet pang of sadness through his chest, and he holds onto that same feather as he rolls over to try and ignore what's going on. He wants sleep. So what, if the emperor is gone and there might be a large rumor ripping through the nation right now? That's not Techno's problem.

Except then it is, because when Phil is gone, he and Wilbur are then technically next in line for the throne, and- god dammit, why is it so early?

“Guardsss.” Techno calls out half-heartedly. “There’s ‘n intruder in our room.”

“No guard can stop me.” Tubbo deadpans. Wilbur can’t tell if he’s joking. “Also me and my family slept in your rooms for the night, because our place was kinda being crowded by the people who think Tommy is the emperor’s *son* -”

“Isn’t he, though?” Techno mutters.

“Not yet!” Tubbo snaps. “You people haven’t even gotten the papers- Just because you’re royalty doesn’t mean you don’t do the actual paperwork. There is a process, I went through it, it’s not even that hard-”

“Is it that obvious?” Wilbur hums, trying to think of when exactly Phil is going to get those adoption papers. He would’ve assumed they would be up and ready by now. Then again, Phil’s in the End at the moment. That would maybe cause a delay. “Wait- what do you mean you slept in our *rooms* -?”

“We slept in your rooms.” Tubbo repeats, like Wil is an idiot. “Because my home is surrounded by a bunch of people who wanted to ask me questions and I was not in the mood to be having an interview at such an ungodly time at night.” So then they went back to the castle, where it wasn’t hard to get back in since they just left, and with Tubbo being half-dead and exhausted with the day, no one disagreed when Tubbo pulled Niki and Ranboo along in the direction of Tommy’s room he had shown off earlier.

Tommy’s bed is ridiculously soft. Tubbo can’t believe his friend is going to be living in total luxury now. That’s just unfair. Tubbo wants a comfy bed.

Ranboo had been a little hesitant over stealing Techno’s bed for the night, but they had all been tired enough to not question it, especially with the look on Tubbo’s face that said *I am*

going to cause problems when I am rested enough for this bullshit.'

Niki took Wilbur's room without complaint. It's not as if the princes were using it. Plus, she was not going to deal with a grumpy Tubbo. That teen had gone through enough for the day, she was not going to touch the possible bomb waiting to go off.

"Do you have no respect?" Wilbur asks, narrowing his eyes with a slight frown. "Do you even know who I am?"

"Someone who isn't getting up fast enough." Tubbo responds, seeming unimpressed. Wilbur only frowns harder. "Look. Tommy's not back, the *emperor* isn't back, and the kingdom is kinda having a party with the word going around. I have a feeling that maybe, just maybe, you should, you know. Fix that."

Because this is not Tubbo's problem. His only problem is Tommy, that's it, and his Tommy is currently in another *realm*. This is an early morning and a bad day so far. At least the food is great up in the castle. There's one benefit.

Tubbo is going to reap the benefits of being around royals until he gets kicked out, that is his promise. He deserves a treat. And money. Several things, actually-

"Could you give us a minute to wake up, first?" Technoblade questions, waving a hand in the air with his eyes still closed. Wilbur rubs at his face with a yawn, trying to push away the drowsiness sticking to his skin and instead call upon that intellect he knows he has.

Phil should be back by the afternoon, with how long his visits usually are. But this time around, he went with Tommy. There's no telling how that's going to affect their return.

Either way, they can adapt. They will have to. Because Wilbur doesn't think he has a choice with the way this child keeps staring at them so intensely. It almost reminds him of Tommy, that burning, vaguely angry look. No wonder they're best friends.

“You have five minutes or else I’m coming back in here with a horn.” Tubbo threatens, turning back around and waltzing right out the door he came in through.

“Where would you even get a horn?” Wilbur asks.

“You’re royalty. You probably have one around here somewhere.” Tubbo shrugs, and he closes the door behind him. How polite.

Wilbur just blinks at the door with a bleary look, then he turns his attention to his twin, who has decided to try and go back to sleep, even with Tubbo’s threat.

“I miss Dad.” Wilbur says, a random confession out in the open.

Technoblade hums, eyes still closed, his hand held close to his heart. In his palm, the feather stays safe. “Yeah, me too.”

The princes eventually drag themselves out of Phil’s room to go eat breakfast for the day, and Tubbo is also waiting for them at the dining table, a meal of his own in front of him.

“How long have you been up?” Technoblade asks, purely to just make conversation and to maybe know just how ahead this kid is in the day. Technically, they’re the princes and they have the power here.

And yet Tubbo is sitting in Phil’s seat.

Techno would be kinda ticked off if he didn’t find it funny. Plus Wilbur looks vaguely intimidated. That’s always funny.

“An hour. Around there.” Tubbo shrugs, a newspaper in his hands. He skims through it as they sit down, and he takes a bite of his food with an expression of pure satisfaction. “I am stealing your kitchen.” He announces, putting the newspaper to the side.

“Please don’t.” Techno protests.

“What have we missed?” Wilbur asks, wanting to get straight to the point. Now that he's actually up, he's itching to know what's going around the kingdom, what are the rumors and the secrets swirling around. He's always been one to keep an ear out for interesting talk. He likes to be kept up with the people. It's good habit. “What's this about Tommy being Phil's son?”

Tubbo practically flings the newspaper at him, shoveling another mouthful of food into his mouth. “Front page. Right there. In bold.” He chews for a moment. “My name is on there, too. Isn't that cool?”

Wilbur takes the paper with furrowed brows, holding it carefully in his hands as he reads through the front page. Sure enough, it is there, bold letters, a rumor leaked directly from the castle, apparently.

The long lost son of the emperor.

Wilbur must make some sort of face at the words on the paper, because Techno snorts as he reaches for his fork. Wilbur just gives him a look over the newspaper, and he rests it against the table, turning his attention onto Tubbo.

“Where is your family?” He asks, hoping that maybe they will be able to offer some sort of calm to Tubbo's quiet chaotic energy. “Did you guys deal with the crowds alright?”

“We just turned right back to the castle.” Tubbo shrugs. “I didn't even get into the bakery. Also Niki and Ranboo went to go see the garden.” While they were at the castle, might as well enjoy all the sights it had to offer. Niki had adored all the flowers in the greenhouse. It's more than she ever sees on a regular basis.

“Alright, well.” Wilbur pauses, holding the newspaper up again. “I suppose you guys can stay here until the general interest settles down...”

“What exactly happened?” Technoblade asks, raising an eyebrow. “Someone said Tommy was adopted?”

“Nope.” Tubbo chimes, and Wilbur throws the newspaper over. Techno catches it with a huff. “You see, apparently one of those traitors from yesterday gave the rumor that Tommy is the emperor’s long lost son, because- that’s just what they thought, I guess.” Tubbo shrugs, making an incredulous face. “They’re wrong, obviously.”

“Were they hoping for it to come off as some sort of grand scandal?” Wilbur questions, more of a rhetorical question if anything. “I don’t think the people would care all that much.” It would create shock, no doubt, people wanting to know more and being surprised over the news, but Wil doesn’t think they’d start ramming down the castle gates over something like that.

“You see, that person failed to take into account that, no matter how annoying Tommy is, he is endearing, so obviously, everyone’s happy about it.” The news had been generally well taken by the public, considering the amount of flowers that had shown up at the orphanage’s doorstep. Tubbo had actually been kinda caught off by that one, but he supposes it was a way of saying thank you for that place taking care of the prince for so long.

Tubbo thinks he deserves some of the credit here. Honestly, where would Tommy be without him?

Maybe not in the End realm.

“Huh.” Is all Techno says, reading over the newspaper in his hand. “And when did this rumor get leaked?”

“Last night?”

“Uh-huh.” Techno nods. “And they’ve already got newspapers by sunrise. Yeah, I think this one is going to take a little while to blow over.”

Tubbo leans back in his head, a worried look taking over his expression. “So what do we do?” He asks, a bit softer than how his tone has been all morning.

“Ah.” Wilbur falters. “Well, the thing is, both Phil and Tommy are in the End right now, no clue when they’re coming back, and so…” He shrugs at Tubbo. “We wait?”

Tubbo frowns, narrowing his eyes with something that is very clearly not impressed.

“It’s all we can do.” Wilbur defends. “Technically, Phil should be releasing some sort of announcement over something like this, but since he’s not *here*, the talk is just going to get worse. People are going to get curious, especially since you just came back to the castle. Right now, we’re going to eat, and then we’re going to wait.”

“Really?”

“Do you want to go address the people over your best friend being royal blood, apparently?”

Tubbo blinks. “No.”

“Then eat your food.”

Tommy sighs from where he’s sat down on the ground, leaning his elbows onto his knees as he watches Phil try and bargain with a literal fucking dragon.

He honestly doesn't think Phil is going to get anywhere with that, but might as well try. He doesn't want to be stuck here in the End, even if it has a cool dragon and an endless, terrifying void. Tommy would like to head home now. He's done with the day and all it has to offer, he wants that comfy bed in his new room.

Even if it is kinda boring just sitting here in the silent darkness of the End, it's a little funny to watch Phil travel around the island, following after a dragon that wants nothing to do with him. It's not something Tommy thought he would ever see in his lifetime, the emperor trying to start a conversation with a dragon that should be dead.

"Hey!" Phil calls, once again running on his feet, the dragon ahead of him moving away with a huff of purple sparks. "Come back here right now, I am trying to *talk* to you-"

A growl echoes through the air, and while Tommy's eyes go wide, and he shrinks away from the unfamiliar noise, Phil just scoffs, seeming nearly offended.

"Oy!" Phil calls again, his wings spreading out wide as he takes off into the air, flying around to right in front of the dragon's face. "Look, we really need to go, I'm sorry-" The dragon turns away with a rumble from its throat. "-this isn't the best time for a visit! I've got to go take Tommy home- don't you dare turn away from me-"

Tommy laughs a little under his breath, watching Phil fly after the dragon once more, nearly getting hit by those giant wings the dragon has. The beast stretches out its wings with a low growl, and as Phil continues to talk, it leaves the ground and heads up towards the black sky.

Phil doesn't miss a beat. He follows right through the air.

Tommy watches them both with a bit of wonder, and a slight voice of jealousy at the back of his head. He knows he'll probably get his own wings eventually. Hopefully. But that doesn't stop the way he wants to reach up towards the void like Phil does.

The End is such a dark and quiet place. It's nothing like home, no stars to be seen, no buildings or people to be found. It's only the void, the island, and the dragon who lives here.

It's incredible.

There's no doubt that the void is a terrifying thing, Tommy feels his stomach drop a bit just looking at it, looking at how far it goes, but there's also that same wonder that comes with seeing it as well. Because no one ever sees the void like this. No one's ever seen the End, other than Phil.

In his head, Tommy turns over the same tale he's been told plenty of times before, Phil defeating the dragon, slaying it, conquering it and gaining his victory, creating the empire from the remains of his battle. Now Tommy knows the real truth, and he puts together the whole story in his head, just to pass the time as Phil travels through the pitch black sky with a dragon that should be slain.

So, one day, Phil decided to try his hand at defeating the dragon like all the other travelers who went to the End. Unlike everyone else, he survived, and ended up befriendng the dragon somehow. When he came back through, he was given wings, and then eventually, was given a crown.

Wings.

Tommy turns his head to the portal at the center of the island, curiosity filling up his head. Could he get wings too, just by going through the portal? Would that be possible?

Ever since Tommy's seen that tattoo on his back, ever since it was marked down in his files and ever since he's told Tubbo of it, he's been sure of one thing. He wants to fly. He is going to fly.

The chance to finally have that seems so close, so in reach, and in an instant, Tommy's curiosity bursts into a desperate flame, something that pushes him forward.

He *has* to fly.

Standing up on his feet, Tommy tilts his head back and sees Phil circling through the dark sky, the outline of a large dragon just beside him. He follows them both with his eyes, holds a hand over his shoulder, trying to tap at that picture of wings on his skin. How does he get that? How did Phil get his? Was it the portal, or was it something else? Tommy can't be sure, not with how the story he's known all his life has actually been an entire lie.

Tommy turns his head to the void.

He walks, slowly, with an eye kept on the sky, and he makes his way across the island, carefully stepping towards the edge, where the void is nearly suffocating, a vast darkness encompassing this single island.

What happens if you fall in it, Tommy wonders. What happens if someone just tips over the edge, swallowed up by the pitch black that doesn't have an end?

He steps away from the edge. He's not so sure he wants to find out. While he's curious and he *wants*, he doesn't have a death wish. He likes to think he has some common sense, at least. Just a little.

"Tommy!" Phil calls his name, and Tommy whips his head around to find Phil gliding down towards him, wings stretched out wide. "Hey, mate, don't get too close to the edge."

"I'm not going to jump." Tommy crosses his arms across his chest, frowning as Phil lands gently on his feet.

"No, but you could fall." Phil gives a grin, walking up beside Tommy. "Had no luck with Kaida, she's clearly a little pissed off with me at the moment, so there's not much else to do but wait."

"We're stuck here." Tommy deadpans.

“Not really...?” Phil trails off, trying to protest. He fumbles at Tommy’s disbelieving look. “Hey! Look, she can’t keep us here forever! And besides, we still technically have places to go. There’s more past this island.”

Tommy blinks with surprise. “Really?”

Phil nods, staring out into the void. “There’s other islands, far off. It’s a long fly, though, and I don’t usually go without a guide.” He glances up at the dragon overhead, who’s disappeared off into the sky, nowhere to be seen in the black sky. Tommy can spot the beacons shining up at that same dragon, but he can’t actually spot the dragon itself. It’s a little scary, but he’s sure it won’t kill him. Probably.

Tommy’s eyes fall onto the feathers on Phil’s back, a matching black with the void around them, a result of leaving this place. Or maybe something more? In the stories, sometimes Tommy had heard Phil got his wings through killing the dragon, through activating the portal, through going through the portal. He supposes with a wide-known story like that, details can occasionally get a little skewed.

But this is important.

“How did you get your wings?” Tommy asks, almost a little too abrupt, a little too desperate. Phil looks at him with a bit of shock in his eyes, and Tommy immediately looks away, his face feeling a tad warm. “I mean- well, the dragon part wasn’t true. So I’m wondering if maybe you got your wings in a different way, too.”

Phil just smiles, and Tommy can see it out of the corner of his eye.

“I did, actually. The common story is that I got them from the portal.” Phil admits, and when Tommy takes a quick glance at Phil’s face, he finds a strange glint in those eyes, something bright.

“But that’s not true?”

“No.” Phil hums, and he doesn’t go on. Tommy internally dies a little with the need to know. He doesn’t want to go screaming out for answers, but he is very close to it. “You know, I had that same tattoo on my back before I came to the End.”

Tommy freezes.

“What?” He asks, eyes wide as he turns towards Phil, taking a step back.

Phil keeps his own eyes towards the void. He smiles, a little amused, a little fond, and Tommy would enjoy the kind look if it weren’t for the way he feels like his world has been suddenly shifted a little to the left.

“What?! What do you-” Tommy goes to ask how he had it, if he was born with it too, but then he pauses at the fact he’s never told that to Phil at all. “How did you-?” He cuts himself off, mouth clicking shut.

“I was looking through your files from the orphanage.” Phil shrugs, speaking casually, as if he isn’t breaking Tommy’s entire mind at the moment. “You have wings.”

“Not real ones.” Tommy mutters.

“They still count.” Phil defends, Tommy huffing.

“I can’t even get them to actually be real.” Tommy disagrees, sighing. “Not like yours. I don’t know how.”

“It’s not like I knew how either.” Phil points out. “When I first came to the End, I was practically trapped here for weeks, so I just figured it out through time. Kaida flew me around a bit, and then decided to show me what’s underneath the island. I got curious. Maybe a little reckless.”

Tommy processes those words, trying to imagine Phil on his own, stuck in this place with only a dragon as his companion. The portal closed until it decided otherwise.

“Wait, you-” Tommy pauses. Starts again. “You fucking jumped into the *void*?”

“I didn’t jump.” Phil huffs. “It was more of a- reach, into it. I just touched it.”

“You went into the literal void.” Tommy deadpans. He turns to the edge of the island, pointing a hand out. “That! You looked at that and thought that was a good idea?!”

“I was bored.”

“Still!” Tommy sputters. “What- Wouldn’t it kill you?”

“Only if you stay in it.” Phil says, and Tommy turns over that info in his head. He glances towards the edge once more, but with a different light.

“...Does it hurt?”

Phil raises his eyebrows. “It’s more heavy if anything. And I don’t think now is a good time for you.”

“You said I could get my wings.”

“I did not say anything near that.”

“Yes, you said-” Tommy walks towards the edge, Phil seeming slightly panicked and staying right at his heels, a hand stretched out. “-you touched the void, and then you got wings, so if I do the same-”

“True, but the void will always be here.” Phil bargains. “You can wait, can’t you? You’re- You’ve had a *day*, mate.”

Tommy stops near the edge, the fall only a few steps away. “Yes. But also, I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but we’re currently stuck here, because the dragon in the sky doesn’t want to open the fucking portal.” He points up at the sky, and Phil looks up. Tommy takes the split second to step closer to the edge. “So might as well get something out of this.”

“Tommy.” Phil says, and that makes him pause a little, just from the tone in his voice, a slight warning, nearly scolding. “It’s a big drop.”

Tommy does acknowledge that, and he also acknowledges the way his heart is slamming in his chest, and how his hands want to shake from the slight fear of the never ending darkness just behind him, just underneath him. It is a big drop. It’s the literal void, it’s deadly and terrifying and it’s magic.

And Tommy wants to fly.

So he will fly.

“You’ll catch me.” Tommy says, entirely honest, and entirely trusting, and Phil’s face shifts into shock, looking moved, and then he’s right back into that slight panic as Tommy tilts back-

And falls.

Phil’s right after him, jumping off without a single bit of hesitation, and Tommy feels his hair be pushed around as he goes into freefall, his body going weightless as he loses anything to

hold onto. The island leaves them both, staying above Tommy's head as he falls down, Phil with him.

Phil reaches his hands out with his wings out wide, and Tommy grabs on, screaming as they fly down, farther and farther until they're just over the void. Tommy can nearly feel it, just from here, and he swears that it's freezing cold, a strange chill coming from an unknown surface that Phil stays hovering over.

"Are you sure about this?" Phil asks, seeming nervous as well.

"Yeah?" Tommy answers, but it comes out more like a squeak, and he stares down into the dark with a racing heart, nearly wanting to ask Phil to fly them back up so they can try some other day, like he suggested.

Like hell he's going to do that.

Tommy twists around in where he's holding onto Phil, and he reaches a hand out hesitantly towards the void, his hand dipping right into pitch black. It's way too sudden and it's far closer than he thought, so he screams and pulls his hand back, only to pause at the sudden change that's come with it.

His hand is covered with stars.

Or at least something like stars. From his wrist to the tips of his fingers, it looks as if the night sky has been painted onto his skin, and he stares at it with shock, Phil laughing from over his head.

"Are you okay?" He asks, upon seeing Tommy cut off his own scream with a strange, curious silence.

Tommy makes a vague noise, before reaching into the void again, all the way up to his elbow. He leans away from Phil, and Phil pulls him away, Tommy still reaching out and watching as

the stars stick to his skin, to his sleeve.

“It’s heavy.” Tommy notes, and it really is. It’s kinda like that time he wore a soaked jacket, the weight of it holding him down a little. This is different though, obviously. This is so much more different. “There’s stars.”

“Want to dive in?” Phil offers, and Tommy hesitates, his knee-jerk response telling him to say no, to turn back, because the voice may be beautiful, but he knows it is also deadly.

He says yes anyway, and Phil flies up, Tommy holding on, his hand covered in stars. They go up, in the middle of the vast void, and then they fall once more, Tommy screaming as they go down, Phil laughing with him. Tommy takes a deep breath and holds it, as if they’re crashing into water.

Tommy’s sight is the first thing he notices as they fall in. His vision goes pitch black, nothing to be seen, not even Phil, even though Tommy is still holding onto him, still close.

The second thing he notices is the weight of the void on his shoulders. Everything is heavy, too heavy, almost crushing. It feels like he’s being squeezed to death and yet also being pulled apart, and the lack of sight doesn’t make it any better. It’s cold, freezing, and every last bit of warmth is gone within seconds, Tommy shivering with a quiet thought of his home, the cold Empire he’s grown up in.

The third thing he notices is the lack of air.

He can’t take a breath in, can’t catch any relief for his lungs, and he struggles to stay calm in the horror of pure darkness, suffocating and deadly. Phil’s right there, though, right beside him, and it helps, just a little. But it doesn’t give him air, doesn’t give him a chance to breathe, and Tommy still panics, mouth open in a near scream.

There’s a loud rumble that travels through the dark, ringing in Tommy’s ears, and a bright purple nearly blinds him right there. Tommy’s only known that dragon for so little time, but he knows it well now.

Tommy gasps for air as they leave the void, Phil's wings struggling to take flight once more, and Tommy feels something pull at his skin, at his back. The stars slip away, falling back to where they belong, but some stay, forever placing themselves where they were meant to be.

The Ender dragon circles around them as Phil pushes himself to take them back to solid land, and Tommy looks behind him to find wings, folded and neat, attached to his back.

Chapter End Notes

heeyyyyyy haha its midnight im half asleep forgive any errors or like typos or the general wonkiness I sleepy and I will just throw this chapter thru ur window

yeah? ya.

thanks for reading!!!!!!!!!!!!

What a loving return

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Five days pass in the castle with the emperor missing from the castle.

Five. Days.

Tubbo is left with the freedom to go wherever he likes in the castle, permission given explicitly by the two princes, who have gone to take Phil's place for the time being and take care of the kingdom. As much as Tubbo wants to shake them both by the collar and demand when Tommy will return, he's not going to get answers like that. That, and they're busy, picking up the responsibilities that are usually carried by Phil.

They're not kings, not at all, and they had been offended at even being called so when Niki innocently questioned them.

"We'd have to go through a coronation to officially take Phil's spot." Wilbur had told them, waving a hand as he sat down at the dinner table, the usual company sitting beside him. Ranboo and Niki hardly have a connection to anyone in this castle other than Tubbo, but they fit in easily enough. "And even then, that would be Techno doing that."

Tubbo blinks, poking his fork at his food. "I thought you both shared the crown, though?"

Wilbur's face scrunches up into something bitter, Technoblade side eyeing him with the most smug look he can possibly create.

"Technoblade is...older." Wilbur says, and wow, that sounds like it's physically hurting him to speak.

“So I get the crown.” Technoblade nods wisely, and Wilbur stabs a fork into his plate and steals his food out of pettiness.

“If you *wanted* it-”

“Hm, I’ll have to think about it-”

“How long would Phil need to be gone for you guys to actually take his place?” Niki asks, cutting off the starting argument before it begins.

“About a month is when I’d start worrying about needing an actual leader of the empire.” Wilbur shrugs, grabbing another piece of food off of Techno’s place. Techno scoffs at him. “Then we’d figure out which one of us is willing to take the spot and have a grand coronation.”

“Tommy needs a coronation.” Technoblade notes aloud, ignoring the fact Wilbur’s stolen some random vegetable off his plate. “The people are going to expect one.”

“They are.” Wilbur huffs, his mood shifting into something of consideration at the topic being brought up. “*I* expect one.” He hums. “I want one for him now.”

Tubbo leans back in his seat with the roll of his eyes. “You haven’t even put through the adoption papers!” Royals and their habit of glossing over rules. Technically, Tommy is still just a kid who lives at the orphanage. Technically, that is still his home, in ink.

Technically, that doesn’t even matter, because now that Tubbo thinks about it, they really just picked him up off the street and yanked him into the royal family. However, they haven’t put through the official adoption yet.

Therefore, Tommy is still a kid of the orphanage and he is still a perfectly normal townsperson, like *Tubbo*.

“I can’t wait for my legal little brother-” Wilbur chimes.

“There’s a process-!” Tubbo hits a hand onto the table.

“-to have his official coronation-”

“He’s still a civilian! He’s still *my* best friend first and foremost-!”

“-for being the new prince of the castle.”

“Is there going to be a party?” Ranboo asks hesitantly. “For the coronation.”

Wilbur grins. “Yes. Definitely, and music, and food, and- We, we need to plan this, I need papers-”

“He’s not even legally yours yet!” Tubbo points his fork at Wilbur.

“Yet.” Techno repeats. “We’re just waitin’ on Phil-”

“Who is taking forever.” Wilbur huffs.

“It doesn’t usually take this long.” Techno mutters, face scrunched up a bit in worry. “I wonder what they’re doing.”

“What the FUCK, WHAT THE FUCK-” Tommy shrieks, launched up into the air by a dragon who he’s really starting to have a grudge against.

“Kaida!” Phil yells, arms reaching out towards Tommy, flying up through the air. “Stop throwing him-!”

“Is this how you fucking learned how to fly?!” Tommy screams, grabbing onto Phil as soon as he slams into him to catch him out of mid-air. “With a dragon-”

“Here I was hoping she was going to let me try and teach you.” Phil mutters, diving down towards the void as the dragon begins to circle back around.

“Go, GO, GO, SHE’S COMING BACK-”

“I’m sure they’re fine.” Niki reassures, a calm face amongst overthinkers. “Phil’s been to the End before, right? So he’ll figure out a way back.”

“Yeah.” Technoblade hums, thinking about the fact that it’s not just the endless void that those two have to worry about. That dragon always gets clingy when Phil takes too long to visit. “We just gotta take care of things while he’s away.”

“We need to plan a coronation!” Wilbur sings, pushing his plate away with a grin. Tubbo gives him a burning glare.

“Nope.” Tubbo lifts his nose up into the air.

“Practically the whole kingdom thinks he’s Phil’s kid, Tubbo.”

“But he’s not! Probably. He hasn’t been officially adopted, so he’s still mine, so, you can’t go dragging him off with your royal rich shenanigans.” Tubbo raises a finger, his voice matter-of-fact. “Ranboo, back me up.”

Ranboo blinks upon having the attention turned onto him. “Uh, he’s right.”

“Ha!”

Wilbur waves at Niki. “Niki, back *us* up! We brought Tommy into the castle and let him into our home-”

“I agree with Tubbo.” Niki smiles sympathetically, Wilbur reacting as if he’s been wounded, sliding down in his seat. Tubbo screams out in cheap victory. He’s totally sneaking Tommy out for a day in the town the second he comes back. Emperor’s son or not.

“The disrespect at this table.” Technoblade hums, Wilbur making a pained noise.

“Tommy’s my best friend, I get to spend time with him first-”

“You mean *murder* him first-?” Techno raises an eyebrow. He hasn’t forgotten those cupcakes. Or Tubbo’s wrath.

“- *Then* you can go drag him away for fancy royal shit.”

Ranboo coughs, but the cough strangely comes out as a muffled ‘clingy’. Tubbo narrows his eyes at him, before throwing a piece of food at his head.

The kingdom simmers in rumors and anticipation. Ever since Tubbo and his family had retreated back to the castle, the people had taken it as a sign that it was true, and that the emperor was sorting out things behind the scenes.

And while a full week had passed without much word of the rumor at all, it still burnt through the kingdom like wildfire. The castle might as well just have confirmed it, because there's no convincing anyone otherwise. Even at the very edges of the kingdom, where news travels slowly, the story still reaches awaiting ears.

The emperor has a new son. Not one from the streets, like the beloved princes, with their journey in rags to riches, but one that was his, really his.

Maybe he was lost in the war, the people whisper. Maybe his mother had run off with the child, and the emperor couldn't do anything to chase after, having to protect his kingdom first, since that was his duty as ruler.

(That story had brought up a sense of pity through several towns. The flowers at the royal gates continued to grow by the day.)

Maybe the child was known about all along, others say. Maybe he was purposefully raised in the towns, beside the townspeople, so he could have a normal, humble childhood.

Either way, no matter how the rumors swung, the same truth was repeated. The new prince is of the emperor's blood, and he's been reunited with his family after many, many long years.

And while Tommy hadn't known it, his reputation had shifted into being a passing face on the street, an alright kid, to being beloved, adored. Anyone who had interacted with him eventually felt a sense of love for the kid, admiring how even though he was loud and friendly and familiar, he was a prince.

Their prince.

The royal family has a habit of winning over the kingdom without trying. Why wouldn't they? Just spend five minutes with the emperor, and he'll ask you to call him by his name, and offer you a treat from any nearby stalls. The royal twins aren't very social with the people as the emperor, but they are well known.

It's known how Wilbur loves to sing his songs into the freezing winter air, his voice sweet and beautiful and perfect to listen to. It's known how Techno is a quick-thinking fighter, a playful soul from the very beginning, willing to win a good fight. It's known how the emperor cares for them, protects them, teaches them the lessons of the lands as best he can.

And now, with the new addition to the royal family, it's known how the prince is hardworking, naive, yet kind. He had worked odd jobs with his best friend for the past year, they had been seen running through the streets and laughing and being kids, and how could anyone hate a familiar smile like that?

Tommy is loved. Tommy is well-loved by the people, the empire itself, and he doesn't even know it.

A week passes with silence from the royal family.

Flowers still pile up in the cold, the people still drink to the gift of their emperor being reunited with his son, and Tommy doesn't know. Techno and Wilbur quietly put gifts to the side, Tubbo keeps track of the events to retell to his friend when he returns, and Tommy doesn't *know*.

At the dead of night, when the castle is asleep and quiet, with even the princes having gone to bed after a heavy amount of paperwork, the end portal whispers.

It whispers, words flowing out in a language that doesn't make sense, voices that don't exist, and it gets louder and louder until it's forming into one word, one thing.

The portal shifts and glows, and Phil steps out, arms full, mouth opening-

“Tommy!” Phil calls, lifting them both from the void, stepping onto stone stairs which are cold and frigid. Tommy rests his head against Phil’s shoulder, eyes blinking, shoulders shaking, and his wings, his *wings*-

They are stars and they are the void, and they’re too heavy, yet so light, so dense with the dark and yet blinding with white light, and they shift and move and then finally settle, staying where they’re meant to be.

“I think I’m going to be sick.” Tommy admits, groaning and putting a hand over his eyes. “My head- my, my everything-”

“I did warn you.” Phil breathes out, stumbling only just a bit as he steps down the stairs, eyes purely on the teen in his arms. His own wings shift from behind them, but those are used to the feeling of the overworld, the feeling of the void being far. They hold a bit too much weight for a second, but Phil brushes it off. He’s gone through this plenty of times, it gets easier with repetition.

He stands still on solid ground, leaning his head down to Tommy and resting his forehead against his.

“Okay, you’re really having a reaction.” Phil breathes out, noting just how burning hot Tommy’s skin feels.

“Everything is *spinning* .” Tommy squeezes his eyes shut, his wings seeming to nearly hum with magic behind him. “Everything is- stop moving, just stop walking.”

“I’m not moving.” Phil tells him. Tommy gives an upset noise.

Before they had stepped through, Tommy had been fairly positive he was going to be able to deal with whatever effects he got from stepping back into the overworld. He was sure that it

couldn't possibly be any worse than that one time he got sick from eating expired candy he found underneath Tubbo's bed.

Apparently, he was wrong. He doesn't even remember when Phil picked him up, but he's glad for it, because at least he's not on the ground.

"We should head out." Phil says, Tommy huffing and blinking his eyes open, seeing purple shift around in the corners of his vision. For a second, he expects to hear a dragon's roar in his ears, but Kaida isn't here. "We've got to get some potions in you."

"If we move, I'm going to puke." Tommy warns. He blinks and blinks and the purple fades, the world slipping back in. Everything is too heavy. His wings are far too heavy. He wonders how Phil is even carrying him, the feathers on his back feel like bricks. "Okay, let's go." Tommy closes his eyes again.

"You sure?" Phil asks, but he's already moving, quickly going to the door, watching it glow and slowly begin to open.

"Mhm." Tommy gives a vague noise. He tries to think of what he's left behind, wonders about Tubbo and Ranboo and those dumb royal twins.

"Your majesty-!" Guards beside the portal door gasp in surprise, Phil walking past them with no time to lose.

"I need Puffy!" He yells, and there are footsteps running ahead, quickly acting his orders. They're eager to have him back. "I need the royal nurse *yesterday* !"

"Tubbo."

There's a whisper over his head, a gentle shove against his side. Tubbo mutters something and tries to bury himself away into the soft blankets.

"Tubbo, wake up."

"No." Tubbo responds, trying to scoot away from the evil hands. How dare they interrupt his sleep? He was having such a good dream, too. Something about world domination, along those lines.

"Tubbo, you really should wake up." The voice says again, and it faintly registers as Niki's voice. Why is she waking him up? Is there-

There's the sound of a door slamming open, Tubbo snapping his eyes open.

"Tubbo, Tommy's back!" Ranboo yells, and isn't he reliable, bursting into Tubbo's/technically Tommy's room as soon as he hears about the news.

Tubbo practically teleports off the bed, his feet hitting the ground before his brain is completely online, he's running across the room, pushing past Ranboo, nearly slamming into a wall in the hallway.

"Wait-!" Niki calls, but Tubbo's stumbling into a sprint, and they've got no choice but to follow at his heels.

"Where?!" Tubbo yells, Ranboo following far behind.

"They- They only just arrived, they were going to Puffy-" Ranboo calls out, and Tubbo runs even faster, leaving both Niki and Ranboo behind.

"God, he can run." Niki notes, huffing as she tries to follow.

Tubbo only faintly hears her. He sprints through the halls, ignoring the passing guards who yell out in concern, then stays quiet in understanding, because it's well known who Tubbo is at this point. And there's no wondering over why he'd be so earnest in getting to Tommy as fast as possible.

He nearly slips and falls turning a few corners, his socks not doing well against the shiny smooth floor. It sinks in just how abrupt Phil and Tommy's arrival is, they really had to come so late at night, didn't they? God, Tubbo's still in his sleep clothes, his hair is a mess-

There's voices echoing down the halls, one of them being rather familiar and filling Tubbo's heart with a sharp anticipation. He calls out Phil's name before he even sees the man, and he turns the corner with a pant, expecting to see Tommy beside him, expecting to see-

Phil is there. So are the twins, hovering right by Phil's side, hands raised up to something- no, someone held in Phil's arms. Phil is still moving, walking the opposite direction at a brisk pace through the hall, and Techno and Wilbur are walking with him, mouths moving, voices soft and worried with their hands held to-

"TOMMY!" Tubbo screams, and Phil turns, eyes wide. Tubbo opens his mouth to yell again, and his voice is promptly choked off at the sight of the black feathers against Phil's arms. Feathers, feathers attached to wings, attached to-

Tommy has wings.

Tommy has *wings*, and they shift, they *move* as Tommy lifts his head with a slight frown, eyes lighting up with recognition as he spots Tubbo down the hall. His face breaks out into a smile, wide and relieved and happy.

"Tubbo!" He calls. Tubbo grins, eyes burning with relief, and he runs towards Tommy nearly instantly. How could he not?

He loves Tommy too much to ever refuse his call.

Chapter End Notes

I'm feeling like a sap today, dunno if you can tell

also yeah yeah oh no lore so sad, but I don't watch lore! So if you're gonna mention it in the comments, just saying, it's flying right over my head.

Thanks for reading! So sorry for the short chapter

Healing, but aggressively

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy gives a warm welcome to Tubbo by proceeding to nearly puke all over his socks.

The moment of joy is kinda shattered right there, being twisted into something a bit more chaotic, a bit more hectic. Wilbur's shrieking with both disgust and worry as he moves away, and Tubbo practically slams into Techno in his haste to move. Phil's the only one who seems to slightly have his shit together, and he just heads down the hall yelling for Puffy once more, Tommy holding a hand over his mouth as he slumps back into Phil's shoulder.

Tubbo looks up with the intent to call out once more, follow at the emperor's heels, but he pauses at watching one of Tommy's wings *move*.

They shift, flapping out for a moment, almost as if in panic, then settling, drooping down and almost grazing against the ground. Phil holds Tommy up a bit higher, and his own wings seem to stretch out, trying to curl around the teen and keep him out of sight. Tommy's wings and legs are hidden away by black feathers, and Tubbo becomes snapped back into reality by losing sight of him.

"Guards!" Wilbur calls for the mess that had been left on the hall floor, and Tubbo pushes past Techno, breaking out into another run once more, ready to sprint through the halls just to catch up.

He only gets halfway down the hall before there's arms snatching around his waist, and he's heaved into the air, screaming and kicking. "Hey!"

"Hello!" Ranboo says back, sounding out of breath. "You *really* run fast, you know?" Tubbo struggles with the arms around him for a second, before tilting his head back to see Niki just barely catching up as well. Her face is red with exhaustion as she rests her palms onto her knees, stopping just behind Ranboo.

Tubbo feels a slight hint of guilt at just kinda leaving them in the dust like that, but it's all washed out by the overwhelming worry that's beginning to grow inside his chest. "Phil had Tommy, let's go-!" Tubbo kicks his legs through the air, demanding to be let down.

"Just wait a second, Tubbo." Niki pleads, trying to catch her breath as Ranboo wheezes with an elbow being dug into his chest. "I'm sure the princes can walk with us-"

"I'm going to *bite* you-" Tubbo hisses, Ranboo resorting to swinging Tubbo around to try and throw him off.

"Please don't-" Ranboo screams as Tubbo tries to take a bite out of his arm. "You are like a rabid *dog*!"

"GOOD!" Tubbo nods, kicking his legs again.

"Not to interrupt your fight going on," Techno cuts in, holding his hands up when Tubbo snaps his head towards him, a burning glare in his eyes, as if Techno is responsible for him being held hostage above the ground. "But for the record, Tommy isn't dying." He says, hoping that'll at least calm Tubbo's mood somewhat. "Probably."

"And? He's been gone for days! He almost threw up on me! He has fucking *wings*!" Tubbo gives back, and Techno does nod at that. "Let me down!" He yells at Ranboo.

"Only if you don't go running off!" Ranboo yells back, Tubbo suddenly going very still. "We can walk over there together." He offers.

"Fine!" Tubbo agrees, and very very slowly, Ranboo releases his hold on the teen, placing him back down onto the ground.

Very big mistake. Tubbo goes sprinting the second his feet hit the floor. His socks practically slide as he runs, and he nearly slams into the wall as he turns the corner, but he is free and he is speed, and Ranboo watches helplessly as he's set loose into the castle halls.

"Well, I tried." Ranboo says, turning to Niki as she walks up with Wilbur with a sigh.

"It's okay. He missed Tommy." Niki points out, not seeming so surprised over Tubbo's near desperation to keep Tommy in view. "There's no stopping him."

"Should we head on, then?" Techno asks, leading them past the halls, all four of them moving at a more normal pace, one that isn't at risk of breaking something.

"I've got a feeling we're going to have dents in the walls." Wilbur notes, glancing at the wall Tubbo had practically ran into. Ranboo coughs to try and pretend as if he isn't laughing.

It doesn't take at all that long for Tubbo to catch up.

He skids to a stop right at Puffy's office, giving a scrap of acknowledgement to the guards standing beside it. They don't even try to stop him as he pushes the door open, slamming it against the wall rather loudly, announcing his arrival.

"Where is he?!" Tubbo yells, gasping for air as he hovers by the doorway, and he's met with the sight of both Phil and Puffy staring at him in surprise. Their wide eyes are kinda funny, to be honest, but it's not the face Tubbo is looking for, so he searches across the beds, and finds a more familiar face resting on one of them. "Oh, Tommy!"

This time, he walks over, his steps still quick as he reaches his arms out, heading to Tommy's bedside and grabbing the teen by the face. He looks asleep, eyes closed, jaw slack, his wings still behind his back.

“Tubbo, mate-” Phil goes to move, and Puffy very nearly smacks him on the head, pointing a stern finger for him to stay sitting where he is. He holds his head with a pout, wings curling around to try and hide himself away.

Phil might’ve brought Tommy here as her patient, but as far as the royal doctor is concerned, both of the birdbrains are her patients at the moment. A trip to the End isn’t always exactly safe. The emperor might’ve gone there plenty of times, but this was a special case.

Therefore, Phil is getting just as much medical attention as Tommy. Which means he *stays* where he is, and lets Puffy make sure their ruler doesn’t have a concussion of some sort. (You really never know, with him. Puffy swears his self-preservation goes down a few notches when it comes to his kids.)

“He’s only resting.” Puffy tells Tubbo, Tubbo listening to her, but not taking his eyes away from Tommy. His lips pressed into a thin frown as he finds Tommy staying unconscious in his palms, even as he shakes him a bit. “I just barely gave him a few potions, he’ll be knocked out for a-”

The rest of her sentence is left unheard as Tubbo leans back, then slams his head forward, knocking his forehead into Tommy’s with no amount of gentleness.

“Tubbo-!”

“Mate-!”

Tommy flinches away with his eyes snapping wide open, his hand jolting up to grab at Tubbo’s wrist.

“*Motherfucking-!*” He hisses in pain, Tubbo laughing in sheer joy and victory. “OW?! What the hell are you-” He chokes on his words as his friend moves forward to pull him into a tight hug, careful to not touch the wings on his back. “Oh. What- huh?”

“Hi, big man.” Tubbo says softly, grinning wide, his chin resting on Tommy’s shoulder. He keeps his eyes closed, lest he ends up staring at Tommy’s wings and gets lost in the sheer shock of it all.

He can literally *hear* Tommy’s mind lagging for a moment, his hands raising up slowly to rest on Tubbo’s back, before catching on and hugging back just as tightly. A laugh bubbles out from Tubbo’s throat, and Tommy mirrors it, slowly working past the confusion before giving a small giggle. They both laugh there, just like that, with bruises forming on both their heads.

“I was sleeping, you know. Resting rather peacefully, not a worry in sight-” Tommy points out, and Tubbo squeezes him harder, hearing a quiet wheeze.

“I *missed* you.” Tubbo only responds, and Tommy doesn’t say anything more, rather just pulling Tubbo closer, his wings stretching out, slowly rising up high-

Tubbo screams in surprise when they close around him, but he doesn’t go to try and pull away. He just tries to lift his head up out of the feathers, fumbling awkwardly as he refuses to let go of Tommy, and Tommy refuses to let go of him. They’re both struggling here.

Phil’s laughing lightly at them both, a hand raised to his mouth as he turns away with a smile. Puffy’s smile twitches a bit in concern over the fact Tommy was supposed to be sleeping, and yet was just headbutted awake by sheer force. The sight of the two of them reuniting is warm, either way though.

Still doesn’t change the fact Tommy is supposed to be *resting*.

“You’re going to suffocate me with your wings, man-” Tubbo struggles to stand properly with the way there’s feathers wrapping around him, and he ends up just kinda giving up, leaning forward and falling right on top of Tommy. Tommy coughs with a slight noise of pain. “Holy shit, you have wings-!”

“Oh my god, get off, you’re going to kill me-”

“You tried to kill me first.”

“I’m not trying to do this on purpose!” Tommy pushes Tubbo half-heartedly. “You’re the one who literally just- woke me up-”

“You were asleep-”

“-by slamming your head into mine-”

“-and it has been a very long while since I’ve seen you-”

“-I think I’ve got a fucking headache, oh god.” Tommy wrestles an arm away from Tubbo’s hold so he can press gently at his forehead.

“-and I’m very done with waiting, thank you very much!” Tubbo nods, giving a small snort with a self-satisfied smile. “You’ve missed a lot.” Tubbo says, already thinking back on everything that’s passed so far. He realizes with a jolt that he’s going to have to break it to him that most of the kingdom, if not all, are entirely convinced he is of royal descent.

“*You’ve* missed a lot.” Tommy says back, nearly wanting to blurt out right here, right now, that there is a literal dragon in the End. He has a feeling Phil wouldn’t appreciate it though. Hadn’t they had a talk or something about keeping it a secret? God, he can’t remember past the general ache and dizziness that is starting to set in.

“And you can both catch up after Tommy’s taken his nap.” Puffy says, walking over to Tommy’s bedside, holding out a small bottle. “Tommy sit up. Drink this.”

“Blargh.” Tommy only says, and Tubbo reaches out to grab it for him.

“Tubbo, make him drink that.” Puffy switches tactics, and with the way Tubbo gives a serious nod, and Tommy looks like he’s been doomed, she feels as if that’s going to be more effective.

The door swings open again, having been closed earlier by a polite guard after Tubbo waltzed in. Now, the princes are walking in, with company right behind them.

“Dad!” Wilbur calls, pushing past the doorway as Techno breaks out into a run, nearly tackling Phil in a hug. Wilbur does tackle him in a hug. They all go down to the floor ungracefully.

“What good are the guards at the doorway if people are just coming in.” Puffy mutters, watching as Phil screams and goes down with a frantic flap of his wings. “Your highnesses! Stop trying to kill your father!”

“Tommy, are you alright?” Niki asks, hearing Wilbur insists that they’re *hugging* Phil, not suffocating him, there is a slight difference, honestly-! “Where’s Tubbo?” She asks, both her and Ranboo hovering by Tommy’s bedside.

Tommy lifts a wing. Tubbo waves from where he is.

“Oh.” Ranboo blinks, eyebrows furrowing in slight confusion. There’s a slow shock upon just seeing wings connected to Tommy at all, but he tries to focus his attention on one thing at a time. For instance, the bottle in Tubbo’s hand. “What’s that?” He asks, pointing vaguely at it.

“Medicine!” Tubbo chimes, sitting up and somewhat escaping from Tommy’s wings. “It’s for him.” He says, gesturing at Tommy with the bottle, then proceeding to try and pour it into Tommy’s mouth.

“You are going to fucking spill it- get that *away* from me-!” Tommy slaps at his hand, pushing Tubbo away by the face as Tubbo grabs at the front of his shirt, the two of them nearly instantly going into a scuffle.

“Uh-” Ranboo watches as Tommy tries to bite at Tubbo’s hand, Tubbo whacking him in the head with the bottle. “Should- should we stop them?” He asks Niki, who’s staring past them at Puffy lecturing both the princes as they refuse to let go of Phil.

“-I have more power as a prince, so I say we get to hug him.” Wilbur is saying, Techno humming in agreement. Phil wheezes in amusement.

“I have more authority as the royal nurse with him as my patient, so I say you let him get off the ground-” Puffy insists, her hands on her hips as she leans down to them both.

“Request denied.” Techno responds, Phil wrapping a wing around his shoulders with a cackle.

“Your majesty.” Puffy deadpans, Phil giving a sheepish grin. “*Phil.*”

“I got him to drink it!” Tubbo yells out in victory, Puffy standing up straight and looking over to see Tommy coughing as Tubbo holds up an empty bottle.

“Oh, god, I see-” Tommy coughs again. “I see the light, I’m dying-” Ranboo gives a sympathetic pat on his shoulder, wary of the wings.

“Great job.” Puffy smiles. Tubbo is actually an incredibly effective tactic, now that she considers it. “Now he just needs to go to sleep.”

“I got that!” Tubbo nods, telling Niki to hand him a blanket from one of the other beds. “Give it to me. I’ll burrito him.”

Tommy screams, his wings flapping frantically as Tubbo grabs him with no mercy.

Chapter End Notes

many many apologies for the short chapter, please forgive me ;-; hope you enjoyed,
thank you for reading

sdfghjkjhgf

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

At this point, Tommy is incredibly sure the universe has it out for him. The gods above, the stars and the void, all of it, even that big dragon in the End, it's all got a grudge against him. They've got some personal vendetta and are hellbent on getting it all straightened out, no doubt.

For what reason? He hasn't got a clue, because he's done nothing wrong ever. He's a fucking delight to the world, honestly, and yet for some reason, the world responds with 'Fuck that kid in particular'.

It's unfair. Outrageously unfair, actually. Isn't Tommy supposed to eventually be a prince? Yeah, that's right, he's using the royal card even if he's not officially there yet. He's royalty at this point, where is the respect? The people bowing at his feet and giving him money? That's probably something the royals get, right? He deserves that.

Not *this*.

This being getting burritoed like some sort of angry cat who won't behave, trapped with layers of blankets expertly woven around him by the absolute light of his life/the bane of his existence, Tubbo.

Damn that fiend for knowing Tommy's most ticklish spots. Tommy knew he couldn't ever beat Tubbo in a fight like any day, but there was a hope that maybe the wings would give him *some* sort of advantage. They didn't do shit. Most they did was smack Ranboo in the face (which, was pretty funny, to be fair) whilst Tubbo wrangled him underneath a blanket with the most terrifyingly determined look on his face.

Tommy has only ever seen Tubbo's Determined Face three times. The first time being when a bee was hovering over his hand, not sure when to land, and Tubbo had been holding as still as

a frozen statue so that he wouldn't muddle his chances. The second time was when they got into a snowball fight so intense that Tommy ended up actually eating snow because of how hard he got hit. The third time is now, with Tommy screaming for help as Tubbo goes on to murder him with blankets.

No one goes to help him. Not even Phil, who's stuck in his own dilemma, with Puffy saying something along the lines of him having fatigue and stress based on the state of his feathers.

Wilbur had taken that statement the same as her announcing his father's imminent death, and Phil may have not gotten burritoed, (although Tommy wishes he had, why is he the only one to suffer in this fate) but he was practically thrown into a bed beside Tommy's so he can 'rest.'

He doesn't rest. He ends up reading newspapers instead, courtesy of Tubbo and Wilbur teaming up to catch the two birdbrains up on what exactly they've missed.

Technoblade sits behind Phil to preen his wings whilst Wilbur shoves papers into everyone's minus Techno and Tommy's hands so they can have visuals. Ranboo sits beside Tommy in where he's trapped in blankets, Niki sits in a chair in between Phil's and Tommy's bed, and Tubbo stands on his feet, pacing around as he gets into his presentation.

Tommy will admit. It's at least not boring.

"-and *then* that's when the presses started going onto the more 'family bonding' route, by saying you were actually spending time with Tommy and that's why you weren't making a public appearance, because he was undergoing royal training-" Tubbo goes on, raising his hands up through the air for emphasis, a newspaper clutched in his grasp.

"Look on page 7, they dug up some of mine and Techno's class lessons from when we were younger." Wilbur cuts in, waving a hand from where he sits comfortably at Phil's legs. Techno pauses for a moment in where he's fixing Phil's feathers, and instead leans towards Phil to get a glance at where Phil is flipping through the newspaper in his hands.

“And then on page 8 is where they speculate what hobbies Tommy might go into.” Tubbo adds, nodding earnestly, Phil flipping the page with an amused hum.

“Swordfighting, huh.” Ranboo mutters, skimming over the paper in his hands. He turns his head over to Tommy beside him. “Ehhh, I don’t know about that one.” He teases, thinking back on how Techno absolutely killed him when they were trying out ‘training’. Tommy gives him the most menacing glare he can manage while being stuck behind layers of soft material.

“He could do gardening.” Niki suggests, trailing a finger down her paper. “I can see it.”

“Why not alchemy?” Wilbur asks, but it’s more towards Phil, who gives a rather unconvinced look at those words. “Let the child create drugs, dad, you know you want it.”

“No, I do not.” Phil scoffs, closing his newspaper and whacking it towards Wilbur. Techno grunts as Phil’s wings move away from where he had been working on them. Phil sits back with a pointed look at Wil, Wilbur just giving a charming grin.

“For the sake of our health, how about we don’t let him have the ability to possibly make poison, actually.” Techno points out, and Wilbur huffs out in disappointment.

“Well, that’s no fun.”

“Don’t I get a say in this?” Tommy asks dryly, trying to push as much annoyance as he possibly can into his voice, so he can let everyone in this room know that he is being *mistreated*.

“No, you’re burritoed.” Tubbo responds like it’s just a fact. Tommy being burritoed means Tommy gets no rights. Tommy disagrees immensely. “Moving on! So the people started theorizing about royal lessons then, right? So then comes the topic of *flying* lessons-”

And Tommy promptly tunes out of the conversation, lest he ends up blurting out “I did somewhat learn to glide actually, and it’s all thanks to the intense panic of a dragon trying to fling me into space while Phil kept trying to save me. Wonderful learning experience, the near-death adrenaline really adds a *kick* .”

He tries to escape from the prison that is his burrito. His wings push out against the blankets, but they don’t break free, and Tommy squirms a bit in place before going still again. Part of him wants to go absolutely off the rails, yelling and kicking and then putting *Tubbo* into a burrito, but that part of him is incredibly drowned out by the maybe kinda perhaps a lot of sleepiness that is weighing heavy on his shoulders.

He huffs, turning his head and hitting it against the pillow. He was fighting for his life and about to nearly fly up to the ceiling just a few minutes ago, where has all that energy gone?

Tommy glances towards Tubbo, watching him continue to pace, his speaking growing more and more quick as he gets into the theories of people trying to figure out how the emperor would teach someone to fly. Maybe that’s where his energy went. Tubbo stole it.

Tubbo’s burritoed him, Tubbo’s poisoned him with evil cupcakes, why hasn’t Tommy like, banished him, or something at this point? He definitely should. He’s pretty sure if he can just pester Phil enough, he can get Tubbo entirely thrown out of the kingdom. Along with Ranboo, too. Package deal, they can both go.

Yeah, Tommy’s going to absolutely do that.

Right after a small nap, maybe. His eyes feel a little tired, and he just wants to- close them. For just a second. Then he’s going to wake up and emerge from this cocoon of blankets like a fucking- butterfly, or some shit. Then he’s going to abuse his royal powers and banish Tubbo.

Perfect. Tommy’s going to be an incredible prince. His first course of action will be banishing someone, and then promptly unbanishing them, because to be honest, he doesn’t want Tubbo gone *too* long. That would just be boring.

That, and also he's pretty sure Tubbo would find a way to sneak into the kingdom anyway and then enact an assassination attempt on his head. Except this one would be more successful than the last one with those guys trying to get the portal, because unlike those fuckers, Tubbo is efficient.

Tommy burrows further into his pillow with a soft snort. He wonders what would happen if it were Tubbo becoming a prince rather than him. He's pretty sure world domination would happen at that point. That would be fun to watch. Maybe he'll just give his crown to Tubbo. Sounds easier than being a prince. Although then again what if *he* gets banished?

Ugh, terrible idea. Backtrack, backtrack. Give Ranboo the royal responsibilities instead. Wait, no, then Tubbo's just going to use him as a figurehead and still take the power anyway. Lose-lose situation.

Guess Tommy will just have to carry the burden of the awesome crown. What a shame. He was meant for it anyway. The royal family wants him, anyway, and Tommy-

Tommy's glad with that.

"Shh." Wilbur cuts Tubbo off in his words, Tubbo looking at him with narrowed eyes.

"Did you just shush me?" Tubbo asks, rather calmly, yet there is very much a threat for imminent chaos in the near future underneath those words.

"Look." Wilbur quickly adds, pointing a finger over to Tommy, wishing to avoid Tubbo's wrath.

Tubbo turns, and as does everyone else, redirecting their attention away from the papers in hand and the topics in the air, and instead looking at Tommy, who's still completely wrapped in blankets, the slightest bit of his hair poking out from where he's huddled into the pillow underneath him. He doesn't move, even with all the eyes on him, and very, very faintly, there is the noise of a soft snore.

Phil clicks his tongue with a cooing noise, and Ranboo slowly climbs off the bed, wishing to let Tommy have it all to himself while he rests.

“He’s asleep.” Niki leans closer, seeing the slight rising of Tommy breathing in, his breaths slow. “How long do you think he’ll be out?”

“Until the morning, hopefully.” Phil murmurs, voice quiet. “He needs the rest.”

“So do you.” Techno agrees, fixing up the last few feathers before seeming satisfied. “I think we should turn in for the night.” He says, slipping off the bed and standing to his feet.

“I’ll sleep right here.” Wilbur declares with a whisper, flopping onto his back beside Phil’s feet, his legs hanging off the bed. “You can sleep on the ground, Techno.”

“You’re sleeping on the ground with me.” Techno only responds, and he then grabs at Wilbur’s shirt, dragging him off the bed. Wilbur kicks his legs frantically and whacks at Techno’s arms, and they both struggle and fight as silently as possible, their breaths held back. Phil watches them with something amused, seeing Wil slowly get pulled farther and farther up, until the top half of his body is hanging over the ground, Techno being the only thing holding him up.

“Sleepover time it is.” Tubbo nods at Ranboo, Niki sighing with something fond and helping them both to gather blankets. Wilbur continues to fight, and then hits the ground with a thump. He makes a quiet wheeze. Techno stands victorious, at least until Wilbur goes for his ankles.

Phil sits back in where he is, comfortable in his own bed, looking towards Tommy again. Tommy sleeps on without a care in the world, blissfully unaware of Techno and Wilbur trying to kill each other while trying to be as quiet as possible, while Tubbo, Ranboo, and Niki steal the blankets from each bed in the infirmary.

“Can’t we just sleep on the beds?” Ranboo notes, pulling up another blanket and gathering it in his arms. Tubbo swings a pillow at the back of his head.

“No. That makes too much sense.” Tubbo says, and Niki stifles a laugh by shoving her face into the pillow she’s holding.

They pile the blankets in between Phil’s and Tommy’s beds, creating a perfect spot to curl up and sleep the rest of the night away. Tubbo sets down all the pillows and adjusts the blankets properly, then goes to take up his spot beside Tommy on his bed.

Ranboo makes a slightly bitter face at him. “Hey, didn’t-”

“Shh.” Tubbo shushes him, holding a finger over his mouth. Ranboo’s jaw clicks shut, with not without a rather judging look. Tubbo gives him a threatening point of his finger. Ranboo just narrows his eyes even more. Tubbo waves at him to sit down. Ranboo juts his jaw out at him. Tubbo returns the gesture, shaking his head a bit. Ranboo shrugs his shoulders up, before nodding. Tubbo rolls his eyes and taps at the side of his head. Ranboo shakes his head like he’s disappointed. Tubbo flips him off.

“Hey.” Niki cuts in, the two of them freezing up with something like surprise. “Both you play charades later. It’s late.”

“We weren’t playing-?” Ranboo goes to say, but Tubbo shushes him again, and Ranboo would be very tempted to throw a pillow his way if it weren’t for the fact he might end up hitting Tommy, and that might result in upset screaming.

Techno and Wilbur eventually go to rest upon the pile of blankets and pillows, and the night falls silence once more.

When Puffy returns from where she had left to go search for paperwork, she finds Phil being the only one awake, everyone passed out with quiet snoring echoing through the room. Tubbo sleeps curled up around Tommy, having freed a few blankets off him so he could hug him properly. Techno and Wilbur have lost the concept of personal space, and Wilbur has decided in his sleep that Techno is a great pillow and he can and will squish him with his body weight. Ranboo and Niki are the only ones who sleep somewhat comfortably, the two of them resting side by side with Ranboo resting an arm over Niki.

“I would’ve thought you’d fall asleep with them, your majesty.” Puffy whispers, raising her eyebrows. Phil smiles at her with a quiet snort. “You need the rest.”

“I’ll pass out with them in a moment. Did you get the papers?”

Puffy nods, walking forward and clicking a pen in her hand. “They were on your desk, amongst all the other mess of papers.”

“Not looking forward to going back to that. I’ve got so much shit to catch up on.” Phil jokes, reaching forward and taking the paper and pen from her.

“No working until I’m sure you’re not going to drop dead.” Puffy warns, wagging a finger at him.

“I’m fine.” Phil waves a hand, skimming over the details printed out before him. He’s looked over this before, plenty of times, but now he’s sure of it. Now he’s practically obligated to do this.

He looks at Tommy, at the few feathers poking out from behind him, hidden away by blankets and Tubbo’s arms. He grins, and signs away on the paper before him.

Chapter End Notes

sup

drops back into the void of all my brainrots

(Also yes Phil's finally getting the adoption legal, eyo lets go)

A special day

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy wakes up to someone poking at his face.

He moves away from them instantly, trying to drift back off into sleep, but he's kept awake with fingers nearly jabbing him in the eye. He mutters underneath his breath for them to fuck off, but the fingers don't seem to get the message. He's once again poked, a bit more harshly, with more force behind it. His head actually gets nudged back, and Tommy feels intense annoyance course through him.

He doesn't want to wake up. He wants to sleep. He's so warm and comfy and everything is great in sleep land, so the rude hands can go and fuck off to the End Realm. He tries to swat them away, attempting to turn over, but that does nothing, and he's poked again, his efforts in vain.

Tommy decides to ignore it. He's a big man, who is so very tired. Surely he can ignore and wait out annoying hands.

Poke.

Tommy is durable. He's got this.

Poke, poke.

Definitely not waking up. Nope.

Poke, poke, poke.

He's practically counting sheep, at this point. He's so asleep. So incredibly asleep-

Pokepokepokepoke-

He snaps his eyes open, blearily glaring up through the dark at his attacker, who turns out to be Tubbo, which-- he's not all that surprised about, to be honest. Of course it's Tubbo.

"The fuck are you doing?" Tommy mutters out, and Tubbo slaps a hand over his mouth, Tommy being exactly three seconds away from trying to bite him.

Tubbo urgently points off from Tommy's bed, and Tommy, being half-asleep and not really wanting to put in the energy to attempt to strangle Tubbo at the moment, decides to listen. He looks over, and falters at the sight of everyone being completely knocked out. He stares, and hears the noise of faint snoring. He thinks it's coming from Wilbur. It's probably coming from Wilbur. He bets that bitch snores loudly.

Looking back at Tubbo, Tommy raises his eyebrows, communicating that he's got the message, they need to be quiet. Tubbo seems satisfied with that, and he takes his hand away, poking at Tommy's face again.

"Wha- Stop that!" Tommy whispers, batting Tubbo's hand away. "I'm up!"

"I know." Tubbo whispers back. He still tries to tap at Tommy's face again, and Tommy grabs at his wrist, forcing Tubbo to poke his own face. Ha. Justice. Tommy reigns supreme.

Tubbo just shakes off Tommy's grip. He sits back in where he is, and Tommy sits up with him, realizing slowly that he is free from his blanket burrito. His wings shift out behind him, so very glad to be able to breathe, and Tommy stretches them up into the air, not noticing Tubbo staring.

He pulls his wings back with a silent sigh, rubbing at his eyes, and Tubbo slowly raises a hand back up, Tommy glaring at with a warning look. Tubbo lowers the hand.

"Do I look asleep to you?" Tommy asks, a bit sarcastic.

"I wasn't poking you just because you were asleep." Tubbo defends, his hand reaching up again. Tommy feels tempted to bite his fingers off, but he holds back, because he's an amazing friend and Tubbo clearly has a problem with poking at people's faces, apparently. "You're glowing."

Tommy blinks. "Thanks?" He doesn't feel glowy. He feels tired. A little more rested, but overall just tired. He wants to curl back up in the blankets and take Tubbo down with him.

"No, not like that. Like literally." Tubbo deadpans. Tommy blinks again in confusion. He glances down at himself. He still doesn't exactly look glowy. Maybe Tubbo is seeing things. "Your freckles. They're *glowing*."

Tubbo says it so in awe that Tommy can't convince himself that the boy is just trying to play a weird late night prank. He reaches up to his face and pats at his face, trying to feel glowing freckles. He just feels his face. It feels pretty handsome.

"Really." Tommy says, a slight bit skeptical. Maybe Tubbo isn't lying to him, but he could just be seeing things. It's pretty late still, isn't it? The room is kinda dark. Maybe Tubbo is sleep walking.

"Yes, really." Tubbo nods, leaning forward and jabbing a finger into Tommy's cheek. Tommy flinches back with it, giving a scowl. "Like his." Tubbo adds, and then he points over Tommy's shoulder.

Tommy turns, looking behind him at the others sleeping away on the ground, and Phil sleeping on his bed. In the dark, it's hard to kinda make out their faces, but it's incredibly easy to spot the tiny bits of light coming from Phil, like little stars just barely shining through. Tommy stares with confusion, then leans forward, looking a little closer and finding the little stars to be on Phil's face, his expression calm as he sleeps without a worry in the world. He doesn't seem to realize that his face is glowing, his freckles lit up, and Tommy feels a sense of bewilderment, before then realizing- wait.

He slaps his hands back onto his face. *He* looks like that. Like Phil. With stars on his skin.

He spins his head back to Tubbo, eyes wide, and Tubbo stifles a laugh into his palm, nodding a bit.

"Is that a thing that just comes with the wings, or...?" Tubbo leans in close, his voice quiet, and Tommy makes a small choked noise.

"I don't know!" He whisper shouts, rubbing at his face and wondering if he should be feeling glowing freckles. How does one feel glowing freckles? Maybe they're hot, like fire. But Tommy doesn't feel anything warm, other than the usual temperature on his skin. "Phil didn't mention anything about this!"

"I think it's cool." Tubbo shrugs with one shoulder. He pokes at Tommy's face one more time, and Tommy, in his shock, lets him. "You're a lamp."

"I'm not even lighting up anything." Tommy mutters, holding his palms close to his face to try and see the light bouncing off them. Faintly, he sees a white-yellow glow. The confirmation gives both a drop in his stomach and a thrill of excitement.

"Lamp bird boy." Tubbo says, like that is simply just Tommy's title. "Can you turn them off?"

"I don't even know how I turned them *on*."

“Hm.” Tubbo leans back, holding his chin in thought. “Maybe it’s automatic. Solar powered.”

Tommy scrunches his nose. “I’m not solar powered.”

“You are, in a way.” Tubbo nods a tad bit. “We do need the sun to live.”

“Ok, yeah-” Tommy huffs. “But the sun doesn’t fucking- charge my freckles, or something.”

“Well you don’t know.” Tubbo gets a little glint in his eyes. Tommy hides his face away in his hands.

“Keep your poking hands away from my freckles, you bitch.”

“I’m only curious!” Tubbo defends, shaking a fist into the air. “But fine. I won’t poke at them. For now.” Tommy narrows his eyes with a frown. “I was waking you up for a different reason anyway.”

Now that’s interesting.

Tommy raises his head with caution. “For what...?” He asks.

Tubbo crosses his arms over his chest, lifting his chin up and looking across the room. Tommy follows his gaze, and sees that he’s staring at the door, the path to freedom.

“Let’s go exploring.” Tubbo suggests, something giddy in his voice.

Tommy looks back at him with a deadpan face. “It’s the middle of the night.”

“It’s morning, actually.” Tubbo corrects. “The sun is coming up.”

“How do you know that?”

“I know everything.”

“ ... ”

“I looked out a window.” Tubbo confesses, nodding his head to one of the curtains hanging up over the small windows put to the side. “Let’s go, though. The *royals* are going to be insufferable when you wake up, and I want us to have a bit of bro time. Some bonding moments. We can go fucking- raid the kitchens, or something.”

Tommy hums, trying to shove down the swell of joy he gets with the idea of knowing that Phil, Techno and Wilbur would be having their attention only on him the moment they’re awake. It’s a little daunting, knowing that he’s going to end up settling here in a spot called family. But it’s also the best thing in his life.

“Alright.” Tommy agrees, his heart telling him to take the chance and to take Tubbo’s company while he’s still able to. “But fair warning, I still feel like shit.”

“We won’t go far, then.” Tubbo shrugs, and he slowly climbs off the bed, the frame creaking as his weight moves away. He holds a hand out to Tommy, and Tommy grabs on, letting his friend pull him to his feet. They stand still for a moment, just in the dark, thinking over their choice, and then they break out in matching grins, excitement rippling through them.

Tommy leads Tubbo over to the door, giving a small wave to their sleeping company, Phil’s freckles still glowing softly in his sleep. Tommy can’t help but stare at that for a second, but he eventually focuses on the matter on hand.

The door leading out to the hall opens with a quiet click with the doorknob turning, and as the two teens poke their head out, they're met with the sight of two royal guards.

They both turn their heads to them, with Tubbo and Tommy looking right back, and in that moment, time seems to freeze, the plan seeming ruined and their chance of freedom being out of sight.

But then Tubbo tugs at Tommy's hand, pulling them both through and closing the door behind them, and the chance is right back in their palms.

"Your highness." One of the guards says, their voice quiet. Tommy stares, then blinks in surprise at realizing they're talking to *him*.

"You should still be in bed." The other guard continues, the first one seeming to falter with Tommy's wings in sight. "Both of you."

Tubbo squeezes at Tommy's hand, and Tommy squeezes back.

"We're just going to go for a walk." Tubbo gives as an excuse, and he glances at Tommy for him to agree along. Tommy nods.

"Yeah. I need to stretch my legs." He says, his wings shifting nervously behind him. "You guys know where the kitchens are?"

A pause. They both seem to be staring at his wings, but then they remember themselves, and they nod. "We can escort you."

"Nope." Tubbo refuses. "We're walking." He says, his tone sounding like that explains it all.

The guards nod again, slower, and Tommy nods with them.

“Yeah, yeah, so we gotta get going, then.” He urges, looking down the hall and noting the soft light of torches, the early morning making everything seem so much more hushed.

“The kitchens should be that direction.” One of the guards raises a hand, and Tubbo instantly yanks Tommy along.

“Thanks!” He calls out, and they both bow their heads in response. Tubbo and Tommy make their way down the hall, their footsteps quiet since they’ve only got their socks on. The castle feels asleep, silent, the halls empty.

It’s peaceful. Tommy kinda likes it. Likes the idea of keeping it.

“That’s going to be a thing.” Tubbo notes as they both turn the corner, heading down another direction by random. If they get lost, so be it. Even just this, just wandering through the castle, it’s good enough.

“What is?” Tommy asks.

“The ‘your highness’ thing.” Tubbo looks towards his best friend, raising his eyebrows. “You’re going to get that a lot.”

Tommy makes a bit of a face, trying to cover it with a grin and a light laugh. It feels more nervous than anything. “Well, I am pretty awesome.”

“You are.” Tubbo shrugs. “You’re also going to get a coronation party, by the way.”

Tommy falters in his steps, Tubbo tugging at his hand. “A what?”

“Your coronation. The party after? Wilbur’s been planning it all week- he really got into the idea of making sure it would be perfect. Honestly, it sounds cool. I hear there’s going to be lots of flowers.”

“Well, that’s just tradition, isn’t it?” Tommy says, but the words feel kinda hollow, his thoughts being elsewhere. There is something so heavy about getting a coronation party, just for him. It’s not a bad weight. It’s a good one. But it still feels as if he’s going to be crushed whole, and he’s not sure how to take it. “Flowers and royalty.”

“Yeah.” Tubbo nods, and he slows in his steps making them both stop in the middle of the hall. He looks at Tommy. “You’re not just royalty, though. You’re my friend. I hope you know that.”

Tommy blinks at him, frozen still for a moment, and all of a sudden there must be dust in his eyes. “Wha- what the fuck, man?”

Tubbo laughs.

“Really! What the fuck? Where’s this coming from?”

“Maybe you just needed a reminder.” Tubbo hums, pulling them along again, albeit a little slower. “But also I overheard something earlier, when everyone went to sleep. I was still up when Puffy brought Phil some papers.”

Tommy lifts his head in interest. Tubbo looks down the hall and seems to spot somewhere he wants to go, taking them both there with a bit more speed.

“And what was it?” Tommy asks, Tubbo giving a small laugh, barely held back.

“Adoption papers.” He says simply. Tommy stumbles with his steps, and Tubbo continues to pull him along. “I’m pretty sure it’s official now.”

“Wait-” Tommy sputters, nearly tripping again. Tubbo looks around the corner of the hall, and finds a peek of sunlight rising through tall, large windows. He yanks them towards it. “Wait, you’re- you’re fucking with me. You’re- really?” He stumbles, holding on tight to Tubbo’s hand. “Tubbo!”

“Yup!” Tubbo nods, and he takes them in front of the windows, the glass reaching up high all the way to the ceiling. From here, it’s a perfect view into the cold morning, the sunlight slowly creeping along through the empire, resting onto the newly fallen snow.

Tubbo stares at the slowly approaching sunrise, and he glances at Tommy, who’s staring at him. His freckles are beginning to dim with the light, but they’re still visible, just enough for Tubbo to have the urge to poke them once again.

“Tubbo.” Tommy says, sounding as if he’s gotten something stuck in his throat.

Tubbo just grins wide. “How’s it feel being the prince of the Antarctic Empire, your *highness*?”

Tommy scrunches his nose with his eyes looking wet, and his wings fluff up behind him as he gives a huff. “Oh my god, do *not* call me that.” He chuckles, and Tubbo’s hand feels as if it’s being crushed in Tommy’s grip. “That’s weird on its own, it’s fucking- cursed, coming from you.”

“Oh, but what of the respect?” Tubbo complains, raising a hand up to drape it dramatically over his eyes. He ignores the fact he’s barely given even a scrap of respect to the other two princes in the castle. “The royal crown! Its meaning?!”

“Shut the fuck up-” Tommy giggles, blinking fast to keep his tears at bay. He yanks at Tubbo’s hand, making him stumble, and Tubbo snorts, bumping shoulders with Tommy. They both pause, and settle, looking out to the sunset again.

“It’s weird.” Tommy confesses after a moment. “But it’s good, you know? I’m- I’m happy.”

Tubbo hums, keeping his eyes on the rising sun.

“I’ve got a family.” He says, trying to shrug and make it sound light. He fails terribly. “I’ve got more family.” He corrects, mindful of Tubbo still beside him. “I’ve got- wings, and a seat on the throne, and- yeah.”

Tubbo smiles, squeezing Tommy’s hand tight in his palm. “Yeah.”

He turns his head to Tommy, the sun beginning to come through and rest on both of their faces, lighting them up in a soft, yellow hue. It’s a quiet, good morning. The castle barely begins to wake up.

“Happy birthday, Tommy.” Tubbo whispers, and Tommy freezes still.

He chokes.

“Wh- *WHAT* ?!”

And Tubbo can’t hold it back after that, he lets go of Tommy’s hand and breaks down laughing, leaning over and practically screaming into the halls out of sheer amusement. Tommy continues with his shock, his wings stretching out and expressing his surprise.

“Wait, wait- STOP LAUGHING, TUBBO!” Tommy pleads, Tubbo only laughing harder. “I thought that was next week! Tubbo! That was next week, wasn’t it?!”

Tubbo wheezes and barely gasps out a response. “No!” He giggles. “It’s this week!”

“No!” Tommy slaps his hands to his head, so mixed between laughing and screaming and crying that he’s practically doing all three. Tubbo’s crying too, but it’s from laughter, so

there's a difference there. "You're fucking with me!"

"I'm not!" Tubbo shakes his head frantically, sputtering out another laugh. He leans down so far that he ends up just crouching on the ground, and Tommy kneels down next to him, still trying to get answers.

"Tubbo, no fucking way, it was- there was a week left, I was-" He pauses, holding up his fingers, counting them off. "FUCK!"

Tubbo dies in laughter all over again, struggling to breathe. "You- you forgot?!"

"No, I didn't forget-!" Tommy denies. He had absolutely forgotten. He also just lost track of time. "I didn't- Oh shit! Happy birthday! Tubbo, Tubbo, stop dying-"

Tubbo wheezes.

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TUBBO, SAY IT BACK!"

It's a good morning.

Chapter End Notes

looks at the chapter I just posted like literally a few hours ago haha.....the brainrot got to me

the next chapter is gonna be lots of sbi bonding. We just giving clingyduo a bit of the spotlight :P

thanks for reading!

A cherished son

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“*Dad!*” Is the first thing Phil hears in the morning, and maybe on a better day, he’d be glad to hear it.

However, with the exaggerated way Wilbur is dragging it out, he’d rather just roll over and go back to sleep. That tone equals Wilbur Problems, and it’s too early to deal with Wilbur Problems.

Surely his son isn’t getting murdered at this current moment. He can leave them be.

“Fucking hell-” There’s the noise of something hitting the ground with a *thwump*, and on careful thought, Phil thinks Wilbur might be flinging pillows around.

“Nope, nothing’s here.” He hears Techno say, a slight bit of disappointment held in that tone. Now Phil’s a little tempted to wake up.

“Oh dearest father of mine,” Wilbur speaks, his footsteps coming near. “Wake up, your youngest child has gone missing.”

Phil snaps his eyes open.

He sits up in a rush, swinging his feet off his bed, and almost immediately Wilbur is backtracking, frantically grabbing at his arm to prevent him from running out the door and putting the whole castle into yet another lockdown.

“Missing as in missing from bed! Not in a kidnapped way!” Wilbur hurries to say, leaning a knee onto the bed as he holds a hand to Phil’s shoulder. Phil stares at him for a long moment, maybe a bit too long, the panic quickly washing over and passing by. Then he grabs Wil by the shirt and flings him into the bed behind him. Wilbur goes down with a shriek.

“Don’t fucking wake me up like that-!” Phil scolds, Wilbur wriggling away from where Phil’s trying to attack him with a stray pillow. “You little shit!”

“It’s not my fault- ow! -that Tommy decided to go fucking take a *leisurely* walk- ow, dad!- in the castle halls- ouch, stop it!” Wilbur whacks his arms out, pushing Phil away by the face.

Phil holds a hand around Wil’s wrist, pulling his arm to the side and putting the pillow in his other hand down. “So he’s in the castle?”

“Yes! The guards said he went to take a walk with Tubbo.”

Phil lets the words sink in for a second, then he sighs, letting the pillow fall off the bed, onto the ground. The past few days have been too much. If he had to deal with a kidnapping attempt all on top of it, he’s going to end up setting something on fire.

Well. Setting something on fire for a second time.

He flops forward onto Wilbur, who complains at the weight and kicks his legs without much real effort to get away. It’s all an excuse for a hug, and he will not waste the chance. He does however yell at Techno for help very loudly.

“You’re the one who wanted to wake him up.” Technoblade tells Wilbur, giving no help to his fate. “I said we could’ve just gone out searching for him ourselves, but noooo. We have to wake dad from his slumber.”

“Don’t act like you weren’t considering it too, you literally suggested it-”

“I don’t have any recollection of that.”

“Yes, you fucking do-!” Wil screams again as Phil moves a wing over his face, and there goes Wilbur, hidden away behind feathers. His words are vaguely muffled this time around as he mutters his complaints. Phil only huffs, squeezing Wil’s shoulder for a second before letting go and sitting up, freeing him from the confines of a fatherly hug.

“Where is Tommy, then, if he’s not here?” Phil looks around the room, and finds the makeshift bed of blankets on the ground to be empty. “And...the others?”

“Well, Ranboo and Niki went to get breakfast.” Techno shrugs, walking around the bed to stand beside Phil. Wilbur kicks a leg out to hit his shin. Techno continues his words without a hitch as he goes to grab Wil by the ankle. “As for Tommy and his friend, we have no clue. They could be anywhere in the castle.”

“That sounds like a problem.” Phil says lightheartedly. He’s sure they’re both just exploring and catching up. He’s glad for Tommy to be settling in perfectly fine after having just returned from the End only a day prior.

“It *is* a problem.” Wilbur says, sounding much more serious than Phil. “A big one, actually. We have so many plans in place, how are we going to get anything started if he’s running off somewhere?”

Phil turns his head to him with a curious hum. “Plans?”

Technoblade makes a thoughtful noise. “Well. Kinda hard to begin progress on a coronation without the person who’s supposed to be getting crowned.”

Phil freezes.

He turns to Techno with wide eyes. “The coronation.”

“That’s kinda important.” Techno nods. “It’s also a certain someone’s birthday today, so.” He adds, like it’s just an afterthought. The grin on his face gives away how he really feels about it.

“*Birthday*.” Phil repeats, almost wheezing out the word.

“I’ve got everything in place, don’t you worry.” Wilbur waves a hand. “I made sure the cooks would have cake, and I decorated the ballroom, and I got a couple gifts in order-” Wilbur begins to say, beaming with pride over his productivity since they’ve been gone.

“Oh gods.” Phil hits his hands to his face, brushing his hair back. His wings twitch out in alarm, and then he’s on his feet and he’s off, heading out the door in a blur of movement. Both Techno and Wil scramble to follow, Wilbur falling off the bed in the process.

“Wait!” Wilbur calls, but there’s no stopping him. Phil slams through the door of the infirmary, stumbling out into the hallway and meeting the two guards placed outside. They freeze still at the sudden sight of their emperor, eyes wide.

“You.” Phil points a menacing finger at one of them. With the fire in his gaze, he could come off as intimidating, but with the way he’s just woken up, hair tangled, feathers ruffled, he only looks like a tired dad. “Where’s Tommy?”

The guard falters for a second at the question, glancing at their partner for help. They lift a hand and point down the hall, and Phil takes that answer with grace, quickly breaking out into a brisk walk and moving towards that direction.

Techno and Wilbur are right at his heels just a moment later, the two of them barreling out the doorway and looking at the guard, who just raises their hand again. They run off after their father.

“Uh-” Technoblade quickly catches up to Phil’s side, Wilbur slightly limping from how he had slammed into the ground after rolling off the bed. “Dad. Dad, where are we going?”

“Where else?” Phil asks, turning to Techno with an expectant look. “To Tommy! It’s his birthday and I entirely forgot- wait, wait, I didn’t even get him a gift, I have to look for something-” He stops, looking around the halls as if the present will just pop out from thin air.

“We need to surprise him!” Wilbur calls out, grabbing lightly onto the back of Phil’s wings. “Me and Techno got something from your closet-”

“You went through my closet-?”

“-but you should get something else! Maybe flowers?” Wilbur questions, Phil narrowing his eyes before turning thoughtful. “Or food. Or you could take him flying!”

“Does he know *how* to fly?” Techno asks.

“Yes.” Phil answers confidently. He gives a suspicious pause, having flashbacks of the two of them getting chased down by a persistent dragon. “Somewhat. It was a learning curve?”

Technoblade tilts his head. “You’re explaining that later.”

“Now’s not the time!” Phil turns away, quickly making his way towards his own room. “I need to think of something to get him!”

“I definitely agree, but can I ask we go get ready first before we give out surprises?” Wilbur asks, and Phil looks to Wilbur to find a slight frown. “I am not going to greet the new prince looking like this.”

“He’s technically not the prince until the coronation-”

“You know what I *mean*, Techno.” Wilbur rests his hands on his hips. “First impressions are important!” He gestures to himself, as if presenting the fact he is important and wonderful and must be regarded as such.

“Wil, you threw food at him within the first hour of meeting him.” Phil points out, crossing his arms. “I don’t think you can just create a better first impression now.”

Wilbur sputters at that, Techno snorting. “He *started* it.”

“Didn’t you also fight him in the hallway?” Techno asks, reminiscing of when Tommy had come in through that library window, covered in snow. “I think you tried to strangle him.”

“He was trying to strangle me first!” Wilbur throws his arms up, and Phil laughs.

“That really doesn’t help your case.”

“I’m going to strangle you next.”

“Violence isn’t the answer to your problems, mate.” Phil says lightly.

Techno makes a so-so hand gesture. “Ehhh.”

“Either way!” Wilbur yells, trying desperately to move on. “Phil looks like a mess and we need to be looking proper for such a big occasion as this.”

“Hey.” Phil frowns.

“I think I look fine.” Technoblade shrugs.

“Your braid is falling apart.” Wilbur deadpans.

“It’s a stylistic choice.”

“Am I the only one who cares about our reputation here?” Wilbur screams, Phil huffing fondly and nudging Wilbur with his shoulder.

“Reputation doesn’t matter with Tommy, Wilbur. You know he adores us anyway. I know he admires you.” Phil could not even begin to recount the amount of panicked rambling Tommy had done during his flying ‘lessons’ but he knows that a hefty amount of it had been of his opinions over the twins.

It was mostly positive, except for the solid ten minutes where Tommy just loudly insulted Wilbur’s face with impressive vocabulary, but the point still stands.

“If admiration is constant bickering, then yes, Wilbur is incredibly admired.” Techno nods. Wilbur glares at him, but accepts Phil’s words with a hesitant look.

“Would you believe me if I said I’m only just nervous?” He admits, turning to Phil, speaking in barely a hush. “I have a little brother now.” He says, like it’s a wonder to even think about. “And it’s his birthday. Can’t we make it special?”

Technoblade stills in place, reeling with the words. “Oh.” He says, like it’s just sunk in for him too.

“Isn't it special already?” Phil smiles.

“Nope.” Wilbur says, just at the same time as Techno says “We need more gifts, now that I think about it.”

“Do we?” Wilbur asks, looking considerate. Both him and Techno share a look, and in that moment, it’s like they’ve had a shared thought. Phil feels a slight sort of dread. He was hoping to get just something little and meaningful, so as to not overwhelm Tommy, since he’ll be having the coronation as well, but with that glint in their eyes, Phil feels as if Tommy’s going to be drowning in new items pretty soon.

“Many more gifts.” Techno declares, and he tugs at Phil’s sleeve to lead him down the hall. “We’re raiding your closet again.”

“Again-? Oy! Stay away from my closet-!”

“It’s this way, I’m sure of it.”

“Fifteen.”

“No, wait-” Tommy frowns, spinning around in the halls around him. “No, this way, actually. This way looks more right.”

“Sixteen.” Tubbo says, being pulled along by the hand by Tommy.

“Now this hall looks- okay, would you stop counting?” Tommy snaps, Tubbo raising his eyebrows. “What are you even keeping count of?”

“The amount of times you think you know where we’re going.” Tubbo says. “I’m pretty sure it’s more than sixteen. I started counting late.”

Tommy makes a sour face at that, squeezing Tubbo's hand to try and annoy him. Tubbo responds back by nearly breaking all the bones in his hand with a single bruising grip.

"Ow, ow, OW, motherfucker-!" Tommy desperately yanks his hand away, holding it to his chest. "My bones! My precious royal bones!"

"Poor prince, whatever will he do without his bones." Tubbo says, Tommy sputtering out a laugh. "You know you can just admit we're lost."

"We are not lost!" Tommy insists, rubbing at his knuckles to try and revive them from Tubbo's assassination attempt on his hand. "We're just exploring the scenery."

"You said we were going to the kitchens."

"We are!"

"I'm pretty sure we went in a circle. That vase looks awfully familiar." Tubbo says, observing a certain vase off to the side. Tommy glares at the object like it is the bane of his existence. "I'm starting to understand how you got so badly lost in town now. No wonder you somehow wandered up to the castle, you have a shit sense of direction."

"You-" Tommy jabs Tubbo in the arm. "Are being so mean to the birthday boy."

"I'm the birthday boy too!" Tubbo retorts. "I get birthday privileges. Which means I can insult royalty without getting arrested."

"Wouldn't you do that anyway?" Tommy deadpans. "And birthday privileges don't pardon you from treason, Tubbo."

"Insulting people isn't treason?!"

“No, but I know you might do something else that is considered treason.” Tommy huffs. Tubbo frowns for a second, but then breaks out into a smile.

“I won’t do anything to endanger your life, Tommy. I’m incredibly responsible with my birthday power.”

“....that’s...that’s not reassuring.” Tommy trails off. “Anyway! Other than the possible future crimes you might commit with my incredible influence, we are still not at the kitchens. And I’m starving.”

“We could ask a guard for directions. I think we saw one not that long ago.” Tubbo says, looking down the hall they just came from.

“No, Tubbo! That’s not the right option!” Tommy shakes his head, almost appalled. “We are men! We must find it ourselves.”

“But I’m hungry.” Tubbo frowns.

“Men!” Tommy insists, rallying Tubbo. “Say it with me, Tubbo! We are men! We’re sixteen!”

“Yeah, MEN!” Tubbo yells, throwing his arms up into the air. “Who don’t have a single sense of direction!”

Tommy narrows his eyes at that, and Tubbo breaks out into a small fit of laughter. Tommy turns his back to Tubbo, then with all his might, whacks him across the face with his wings.

It is less than a minute later that Tommy regrets many of his life decisions, running down the hall at top speed with Tubbo at his heels. Does he know where he’s going? Absolutely not.

All he knows is that this hall takes him farther away from Tubbo, and that's the right option in his eyes, frankly.

They pass a few guards as they go, all of them giving strange looks as Tommy sprints down the hall screaming at the top of his lungs. Tommy is sure they paint a funny picture, the new prince getting chased by a boy his age who's got murder in his eyes.

"Truce!" Tommy yells, not more than a few minutes later, already out of breath. "I will give you all my cake!"

"I don't want cake!" Tubbo responds, and then he speaks like some sort of demonic goblin with a sore throat, his voice rough. "I want your fucking soul!"

"WHAT THE FUCK?!" Tommy shrieks, hysterical laughter mixed into it. He runs faster, Tubbo laughing with him, and as they turn the corner, they find two familiar faces.

"RANBOO!" Tubbo screams, as soon as he realizes who's on the other end of the hall. "GRAB TOMMY, GRAB HIM-"

"RANBOO, RANBOO, TELEPORT ME-!" Tommy pleads, running out with his arms stretched out.

Ranboo looks like he's about to start running away from the two of them, and he looks desperately at Niki for help, who only seems resigned to the fact Tommy and Tubbo are causing chaos this early in the morning.

Tommy jumps at Ranboo with full confidence, and Ranboo dodges him out of pure instinct, immediately regretting it as Tommy hits the ground with a thump.

"Oh god! I'm sorry, sorry-!" Ranboo holds out his hands, Tommy laying face first on the floor. "Wait, don't be dead!"

“I’m dead internally.” Tommy groans, pushing himself off the ground. He turns around to find Tubbo looming over him with a small smile. “AND EXTERNALLY SOON.”

“Tubbo.” Niki says, Tubbo turning towards her right away.

“Hi, Niki.” Tubbo greets, giving a warm expression. Niki struggles a bit to not laugh at the mood switch. “Nice morning.”

“It is, I’m sure.” She grins. “But I think Phil was looking for you, Tommy?” She says, turning her attention to the winged boy on the ground.

Or, the boy who was on the ground.

“Where’d he go?!” Tubbo yells, looking around frantically, and finding Tommy to be running off down the hall, where conveniently, Phil had been making his way back to Niki and Ranboo.

“PHILL!” Tommy calls, Tubbo speeding down the hall like a man on a mission.
“TUBBO’S GOING TO MAKE ME INTO A FUCKING THROWPILLOW!”

“Tommy- what?” Phil asks, and then he’s caught in surprise as Tommy throws himself at someone for the second time this morning. Luckily, this time, Phil’s reliable. He catches Tommy without a single hesitation. Tommy is actually surprised with how easily he does it, and he yells in surprise when he’s kept off the ground. “What are you doing? Where were you, actually?”

“We were-!” Tubbo stops in front of Phil, leaning forward on his knees and gasping in to catch his breath. “We were lost.”

“No, we weren’t. We were *exploring* and shit, big difference, Tubs.”

“Tommy got us lost.”

“I did not!”

“Okay, okay.” Phil laughs, swinging Tommy for a moment and having him yell in surprise. “I was looking for you.”

“Niki said so.” Tommy kicks his legs, being let down. “Mornin’.”

“Good morning. And happy birthday.” Phil smiles. “To both of you.” He turns to Tubbo, and Tubbo beams like a perfect kid who has done no wrong. Tommy gives a bitter little look at him. Tubbo ignores it. “Mind if I steal Tommy for a bit?”

Tubbo hums. “Go ahead. We had the morning together, and I want to go spend time with my other family, anyhow.” He glances back at Niki and Ranboo, who stand off to the side, as if waiting for Tubbo to return back to them. Tubbo gives a little wave. Niki waves back, and Ranboo gives two thumbs up. “See you later, Tommy.”

“I won’t be gone that long.” Tommy raises his eyebrows. Tubbo only snorts.

“See you.” He repeats. And he turns and goes, heading back to Ranboo and Niki with a wide smile.

Tommy turns to Phil, who’s already looking down at him with something fond. Tommy coughs, immediately looking away.

“Come on.” Phil waves a hand, Tommy following with. “You haven’t eaten yet, right?”

“Me and Tubbo were trying to find the kitchens...” Tommy trails off, keeping at Phil’s side as they weave through the hallways. Phil seems to do it so easily. Tommy swears it all looks the same. He’s going to need a GPS.

“I’m taking that as a yes.” Phil snorts. “I suspected so. I sent food up to your room.”

Tommy makes a confused frown. “We’re not going to the dining room?”

“Techno and Wilbur wanted to give you something.” Phil explains. “A birthday gift.”

“Oh.” Tommy’s heart fills with happy anticipation. “Well, alright. What is it?”

“It’s a surprise, mate.”

“Come on, come on, you can tell me.” Tommy coaxes, leaning in close with a low voice. “What am I getting?”

Phil stops in his steps, leaning in towards Tommy as if playing along. He goes to speak, purposely taking a dramatic pause, then- “You’ll see.”

Tommy gives an angry expression at that. Phil only chuckles, taking him by the sleeve and pulling him along.

They continue to move through the castle, quickly getting to the living quarters with Phil’s help. The guards they pass bow their heads low with something of respect, and Tommy blinks at the sight before getting ushered along by Phil. They head to the door of his room, Tommy lingering in front of it, and looking at Phil for some sort of signal. Phil just nods at the door.

He turns the doorknob and heads inside, expecting something loud, and maybe like, confetti.

Instead, he finds the room just as it was before.

Sorta.

There's a tray of food off to the side on top of his drawers, which just the sight of makes Tommy realize just how hungry he is. Beside that, on the ground, there's a pile of boxes, all of them wrapped with a bright blue bow. Tommy glances towards his bed to find more boxes beside it, all piled up and wrapped as gifts. There's so many that it reaches up to the height of the bed, nearly hiding it away, and Tommy has to wonder for a second if all of that is supposed to be his.

Because- he'd understand if a couple were his. He's the birthday kid. He should get many many awesome gifts.

But that is a ridiculous amount.

He steps inside, stuck in shock with the sheer amount of boxes placed in the room, and he's suddenly screaming in surprise as arms are wrapping around his middle and lifting him up into the air.

"He arrives!" Wilbur laughs, Tommy flailing as Techno carries him up and then sets him on his shoulders like he weighs nothing. "The birthday child is here." Wilbur snickers, watching Tommy's face shift drastically from panic into pure confusion.

Tommy is so very still for a split second, and he then realizes that he's so very tall from this spot, and then he is filled with immense victory. He still reaches down to hold onto Techno's hands, though. He doesn't trust himself to not fall and break an arm or something.

"What the fuck?" He asks, looking down at Techno, who just walks around, Tommy holding on for dear life. "Don't drop me, don't drop me-!"

“I’m not going to drop you.” Techno reassures, at the same time that Wilbur starts chanting ‘birthday, birthday’. “Probably.” He adds on, messing with Tommy. Phil laughs from where he’s closing the door behind him.

“Oh, you-” Tommy goes to insult him, but then Techno’s leaning forward and tugging him off, and he’s getting thrown with a scream.

He lands safely onto the mattress. Oh. He hadn’t realized Techno walked that close to the bed. He sits up quickly, heart beating from the surely near death experience, and Wilbur jumps onto the bed beside him, pressing his shoulder into his.

“Hello.” Wilbur grins, and Tommy tries to give a sour look, but it fails miserably. Wilbur just looks too happy, and it rubs off easily.

“Hi.” Tommy says back. “Why is the room filled with boxes?”

“They’re gifts.” Techno answers simply, Phil quickly grabbing the tray of food to bring it over.

“All of them?”

“What else do you put in colorful boxes, Tommy.”

“I don’t know! Fucking- confetti.”

Wilbur makes a thoughtful hum. “Well. One of them does have a confetti bomb.” He taps at his chin, as if that’s not a problem at all. “You’ll find it eventually.”

“*After* eating.” Phil quickly cuts in, giving the tray to Tommy as he and Techno take a seat on the bed as well. Tommy takes it with enthusiasm, quickly putting it down before him and digging in. He whacks Wilbur with a spoon when he tries to grab a bite.

“Ow!?” Wilbur holds his hand to his chest, Tommy waving his spoon threateningly.

“Birthday boy privileges, bitch.” Tommy declares. “I can and will use lethal force upon you.”

“Techno will avenge me.” Wilbur says simply.

“But it’s his birthday.” Techno says. “How could I ever inconvenience him? It’s a crime.”

“A birthday crime.” Tommy nods. Wilbur purses his lips with a distasteful look, and he scoots over to lean against Phil instead. Phil just laughs, knowing full well Wilbur is just playing along to let Tommy have a reaction. “However- okay. I need an honest answer, how many fucking gifts are in this room?”

“Not counting the ones in the closet?” Techno asks.

“There’s *more*?”

“You’d be surprised at how quickly the servants were willing to get everything together. There wasn’t nearly this much at first...” Phil says, looking around with something amused. “I was hoping to get you something small, but, ah.” He shrugs. “Wilbur and Techno thought that’d be boring.”

“It’s better, it’s better.” Wilbur insists. “Look, you can open gifts and eat, can’t you? Multitasking.”

“Wilbur.” Phil scolds lightly.

“I’m getting it, you can’t stop me.” Technoblade announces, moving off the bed to look

through the boxes and find a specific one. He puts it before Tommy, who chews thoughtfully at the sight of it.

“Open it.”

“Finish eating, first?” Phil asks, but his heart’s not in it. “You’ll get carried away with the gifts.”

Tommy doesn’t care. He’s been entranced by the idea of Free Birthday Stuff. He pushes the food tray to the side and takes the box in hand, quickly opening it. Techno and Wilbur lean in with anticipation, and Phil smiles with a small laugh.

Tommy falters at the open box in his lap.

Inside, there is a golden crown.

“Oh shit.” Tommy gives a shaky breath, and his hands hover over the crown for a second, hesitating. “That’s shiny.” It really is. There’s pretty little rubies embedded inside it, and Tommy wants to grab it and never let go.

Wilbur breaks out in a laugh, covering his mouth and looking at Techno, who seems nearly smug. “Do you like it?” Wilbur asks. “It used to be one of Phil’s crowns. He’s got a whole collection we used to play with as kids. We don’t touch them as much now.”

“This one suits you.” Techno reaches into the box to take the crown out, and Tommy’s hand reaches out to grab at the crown, as if Techno’s going to steal it away. They both hold it for a second, and Technoblade just gives an amused smile before letting go and letting Tommy hold it for himself.

Tommy stares at Techno for a moment, then looks back at the crown, running his thumb over the jewels in appreciation. He glances up at Phil, who’s smiling so warmly it makes Tommy

feel like he's more valuable than all the jewels and trinkets probably tucked away inside the gift boxes around him.

With nothing more to do, Tommy places the crown onto his head, because that is where it's meant to go. Wilbur adjusts it for him, fixing his hair, and then he leans back, like he's just appreciating the sight. Tommy wonders if this is what they all feel every single day, whenever they've got a crown on their head.

He feels important.

He feels loved.

Phil makes a huff, and he laughs, moving forward suddenly and pulling Tommy into a hug, like he can't just help himself. Tommy fumbles a bit in surprise, but leans into it, and then jolts as Wilbur hugs him from the side too. Technoblade takes his other side, and they sit there like that, Tommy securely in the middle.

"You're squishing me." Tommy complains, pretending as if there is not a waver in his voice or a wetness in his eyes.

"I know." Phil says, and it feels like he's saying so much more than that.

They sit like that for a while more before moving onto the rest of the gifts. Tommy cherishes the moment as it is.

Chapter End Notes

please note that I am a weak fool who can't handle family dynamics so yes i did cry seven times while writing this, what of it?

I know yall cried in Tubbo's adoption scene. be emotional in my comments I like seeing emotional damage its funny

thank you so much for reading!

The end (explosion noises)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The coronation isn't a grand thing.

With everything that's happened up to this point, Tommy isn't up for the nerve-wracking experience of having a good chunk of the kingdom stare at him while he gets a crown put on his head. He insists to Phil that the crown he's gotten is good enough already, and Phil hardly protests, because to be honest, the coronation isn't really needed. Most of everyone is convinced of Tommy's royal blood, anyway.

The celebration after, however, is something Tommy cannot stop. Now that is a force to be reckoned with. He gets his few hours of peace, opening up gifts and sitting in his room with his family, then Wilbur suddenly announces that they *must* go see how the castle is doing, and there's an evil glint in his eyes that makes Tommy have an ounce of self preservation for once.

He tries to stall. Tries to look through the boxes for any gifts he hasn't opened. Tries to hold up his new items and ask for his older brothers to appreciate them with him, but it's all futile. Wilbur hovers by the door, hand on the doorknob, excitement so present that Tommy wouldn't be surprised if he just exploded into pieces with it.

Technoblade eventually goes to stand with him, anticipation on his shoulders, too. Phil is the only one who's patient enough to sit by Tommy for all of eternity, but he's no match for two twins on a mission.

Tommy gets pulled over to the doorway with some (a lot) of complaint, and when he's finally dragged out into the hall, he falters with the sight of flowers scattered all around. Bouquets upon bouquets, roses upon roses, and Tommy steps carefully, then he swings a foot through a pile of petals and tries to kick them up into Wil's face.

He fails, of course. The petals just float up a couple inches, then flutter back down, but Wil sees what he's doing, and both him and Techno immediately team up to start shoving petals down Tommy's shirt. Tommy screams like he's getting murdered, and Phil is barely able to stop them in time.

To which they all then turn on Phil collectively, Tommy having only been used as bait, and by the time they're walking out of the hall, through the castle, Phil's still shaking petals out of his sleeves.

The celebrations kick off with a bang, (an actual bang, Wilbur somehow arranged for explosives to be used, and Tommy did not go unimpressed by the sparkly colors of gunpowder and fire. Phil was slightly concerned by the proximity of it all) and they roll on with the noise of music and the constant greetings of what feels like each and every single person in the castle. Tommy shakes hands and nods his head and gives smiles, and when the food does get rolled out, he's relieved to finally have a reason to not be swarmed.

He sits, he eats, he plots nefarious crimes over the table by sharing several secret looks with Tubbo across from him, who then shares looks with Ranboo, who is entirely out of the loop and looks at them both like they've lost their minds. Tubbo raises his eyebrows with pursed lips. Tommy squints his eyes with a scrunch of his nose. Ranboo nervously devours a bread roll to distract from their stares.

Slowly, bit by bit, Tommy formulates a plan. The best plan. The greatest plans of all the plans that have ever planned, probably. Tubbo nods in agreement with this plan of epic proportions, and Tommy nods back. Then they both nod at Ranboo, who is just going along with this at this point and nodding too, while cradling a bowl of more bread rolls.

The conversation at the table isn't terribly distracting, but everyone's so caught up in the music and food and the bustling company that it's easy enough for Tommy to just kinda-slide down in his chair. He slides, and slides, and slides a little more, then he slips underneath the tablecloth and meets Tubbo there.

He leans forward, the table a bit dim under here. "Are we on the same page here?"

Tubbo gives a thumbs up. "Probably!" Then he turns around and grabs at Ranboo's ankle, practically dragging him into the depths of underneath the table. Someone probably notices

the way Ranboo just gets dragged under with his bowl of breadrolls. They don't say anything, though.

"Alright, Ranboo, time to shine." Tubbo whispers, clapping his hands together and ignoring how Ranboo is still sprawled out on the floor.

"What are we doing?" Ranboo sits up, and hits his head on the table. The thunk makes Phil turn his head, and he at first brushes it off, then realizes Tommy's missing, and proceeds to lean over to Wilbur and ask where exactly their prince has gone. Wilbur has a few spare seconds of confusion, then sheer exasperated panic. Techno steals his plate while he isn't looking.

"Escaping, come on." Tommy huffs, helping Ranboo to lean down further so he doesn't bang his skull into the wood again. "We're going on an adventure."

"Have we not had enough adventure for our lifetimes?"

"This is a different type of adventure. It's a secret adventure. Low risk, high reward." Tubbo insists. "No one will even notice we're gone!"

Meanwhile, Niki has begun looking around and sharing an expression with Phil that can only be described as the "oh no" face. Wilbur is trying to get the music to stop playing. Techno is still eating everything off his plate.

"*You* teleport us out of here, *we* go sneak off to our town, explore, explore, explore, use my royal privilege to get free things, then we come back and we are all set." Tommy explains, having totally thought this through.

"I really don't feel as if using my teleportation is a secure mode of transportation-"

"Oh, hey, I found them." Technoblade suddenly cuts in, lifting up the tablecloth to poke his head under and investigate where the hushed conversation was coming from. All three teens

look at Techno with varying degrees of panic, then both Tubbo and Tommy latch onto Ranboo's arms, and they all disappear in a flurry of particles. "Aaand, I lost them."

They only teleport outside into the hall, a couple feet in the air. They land roughly, with noises of complaint and pain, and the door slams open with people calling their names. Tommy frantically drags Ranboo onto his feet, who then drags Tubbo onto his feet, and they all stumble into a run, then fall again into a pile of limbs.

"Teleport again, teleport again!" Tubbo yells, clinging onto Ranboo's back, while Tommy yells out behind them that they're gonna go for a little walk, don't mind them-

They disappear into another burst of particles. They wind up in other halls. Ranboo lays facedown on the ground for a long minute, and Tommy wonders if he should've considered his poor memory of the layout of the castle before attempting to find a way out.

"If we just keep going right, then we'll get there." Tommy declares confidently.

"We're going to end up going in circles."

"We'll get there."

They don't get there. They don't go anywhere, because Ranboo is still dying on the ground, and Tommy is reevaluating his approach here. Maybe they should ask for directions.

The castle goes into a makeshift game of hide and seek, with Tubbo and Tommy dragging around Ranboo and finding hiding spots whenever someone comes around, and everybody frantically trying to figure out where the literal guest of honor has gone off to.

At some point, Phil comes down the hall, alone and calling out for Tommy. Tommy sees him, in all his kingly fatherly glory, and he makes the only reasonable option and proceeds to take him as a hostage. He clings onto Phil with his wings flapping out to give him a jump, and

Phil shrieks with his sudden appearance, clinging back when he realizes it's just his newest child who has self-preservation issues.

"You should take us to the town." Tommy suggests. "Because it's my birthday, and I'm the prince, and we have to go there or Ranboo is going to die-"

"Is he okay-?" Phil tries to ask, pointing at how Ranboo is leaning heavily onto Tubbo, using his head as an armrest.

"I'm so peachy." Ranboo reassures. Tubbo shakes his head, mouthing 'he's not peachy.'

"The town!" Tommy reminds. "We've got to go!"

"How about we go back to not give Wilbur a heart attack over his party planning going to waste, and I take you to your town later?" Phil suggests, and Tommy groans, complains, weeps, falls to the floor like he's been wounded and abandoned and left for dead. "I'll take you when it's later, when there's less people to swarm you. I'll buy you whatever you guys want, take you wherever you want to go."

"We're being bribed." Tubbo informs Tommy. He's informing it in a way that implies the bribing is effective.

"Maybe." Phil doesn't deny it. Tommy doesn't mind, really. "Come on. Back to the party."

Tommy lifts his head and shares a look with Tubbo. Tubbo gives a grave nod. Ranboo nods too, but he's not a part of this nodding communication. Phil's staring at their nods with slight concern.

"Okay." Tommy agrees, getting up and letting Phil lead them along. The moment Phil goes to walk forward, they all sprint the opposite direction, with the intentions of stealing a horse and riding all the way down to town.

Chapter End Notes

this chapter is more of an extra snippet than an ending tbh, the last chapter was good enough to end off, but I wanted to give just one more chapter.

this entire story is like. A constant circus show. Honk honk. An open ending is the only way to go bc really, tommy is always going to go off continuing chaos and getting into trouble. He's like a wheel on fire that never stops spinning. Zooom.

Anyway. It's been a while since I've touched this fic and this idea. With all honestly, I've lost my drive with it, but i don't think I did too bad. I mean, over 100k words. That's pretty good, right? I'm kinda proud. And also confused?

This is my most popular fic. It's my highest on my stats, my most well known. I reread the entire thing today and I...don't understand Why, (gosh so much of this is a mess) but i suppose the silliness is just too powerful. We all just like a happy story where (mostly) nothing goes wrong, I think.

Uhhm. I feel like some person giving a speech. Imagine me fixing my tie and standing up straight. Thank you for reading, guys. I tried my best! And you gave so much support! that was cool.

I still have many other fics im working on. Change Fate by being Aggressively Kind, Stay Underneath My Wing, Intervention by the Antarctic Empire....if you know those fics but didn't know I wrote them, congrats, now you know! I write a lot. Click on my profile, you'll have a fun time there, I hope. (pls subscribe to me RAHH)

I kinda don't wanna end this note bc then the story is over and I don't like endings. maybe that's why I take forever to update hehe. but anyhow. I'm so grateful for you guys reading. Thank you for every kudos, and bookmark, and comment. So many silly comments.

Have a nice day. Or night. Wherever you are.

-Markus Sircantus :P

End Notes

In this house we have Wilbur-Techno twin supremacy

Heyo, thanks for readin, leave a kudos, mayhaps, comment, hopefully, and if you don't wanna, that's totally chill, hope you're drinking water and taking care of yourself (You better be or else I'm gonna mug you)

I'm tired! If you see a typo no you didn't! I don't proof read these! The words are now YOUR problem! Have a good day!

(If you got fanart or something, you can @ me with the username "sircantus" on either insta, twitter, or tumblr. I would love to see it)

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